

The Solano Historian

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Solano Historian

The *Solano Historian* is published twice yearly at Vallejo, California, by the Solano County Historical Society.

Edited by

**Matthew and Lee Fountain
and Robert Allgood.**

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The purpose of the *Solano Historian* is to stimulate the enjoyment and preservation of history by publishing pictures, stories, articles, and letters furnished by its readers. Much valuable material that would flesh out our knowledge of the past is lost each year because those who might save it either do not realize its value or lack the motivation to take any immediate action. The *Solano Historian* will supply the motivation by showing there is an appreciative audience for such material and that people are intensely interested in items relating to their own background, that jog their memory, remind them of memorable events, and satisfy their curiosity.

Readers who furnish material for publication will find they are amply rewarded by their own feeling of satisfaction and the recognition earned by their contribution.

The *Solano Historian* is now soliciting material of Solano and North Bay interest for future issues. More details concerning this may be obtained by contacting President Sue Lemmon or Lee Fountain. Comments on this issue are also welcome.

The Society does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of statements or opinions of contributions although every effort is made to be historically correct.

Solano County Historical Society
P. O. Box 922, Vallejo, CA 94590



President's Message

Attendees at the October meeting at the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum were rewarded with a fascinating story of the "Crookedest Railroad in the World," the saga of the railroad that went to the top of Mt. Tamalpais. Ted Wurm, author of the book by that title, traced the history of the railroad with facts and amusing anecdotes and showed slides depicting how the railroad started, functioned, and ended.

History is always absorbed more easily when the lesson comes from a talented teacher, and Ted Wurm not only made the lesson memorable but interesting. We hope that members and guest will continue to support these open meetings that are offered for our entertainment and enlightenment.

On another subject, but related to our concern for protection of our local heritage, in September our Board of Supervisors voted to establish a *Solano County Historical Records Commission*. This is a giant step toward preserving our County records; we are awaiting appointment of members to this new and important Commission.

Once again the holiday season is upon us, and we hope you will attend our annual Christmas Party at Green Valley on December 18. The Executive Board and Directors join in sending warm wishes for happy holidays. May the coming days provide you with pleasant memories that will last a long, long time, and be special additions to your own personal histories.

Sue Lemmon President 1987-1988

Our Cover

The cover depicts the California-Pacific locomotive *Lincoln* taking on water from a roofless tank at Creston in Solano County between Napa Junction and Cordelia. California-Pacific Railroad was purchased by Central Pacific in 1871.

About Our Authors

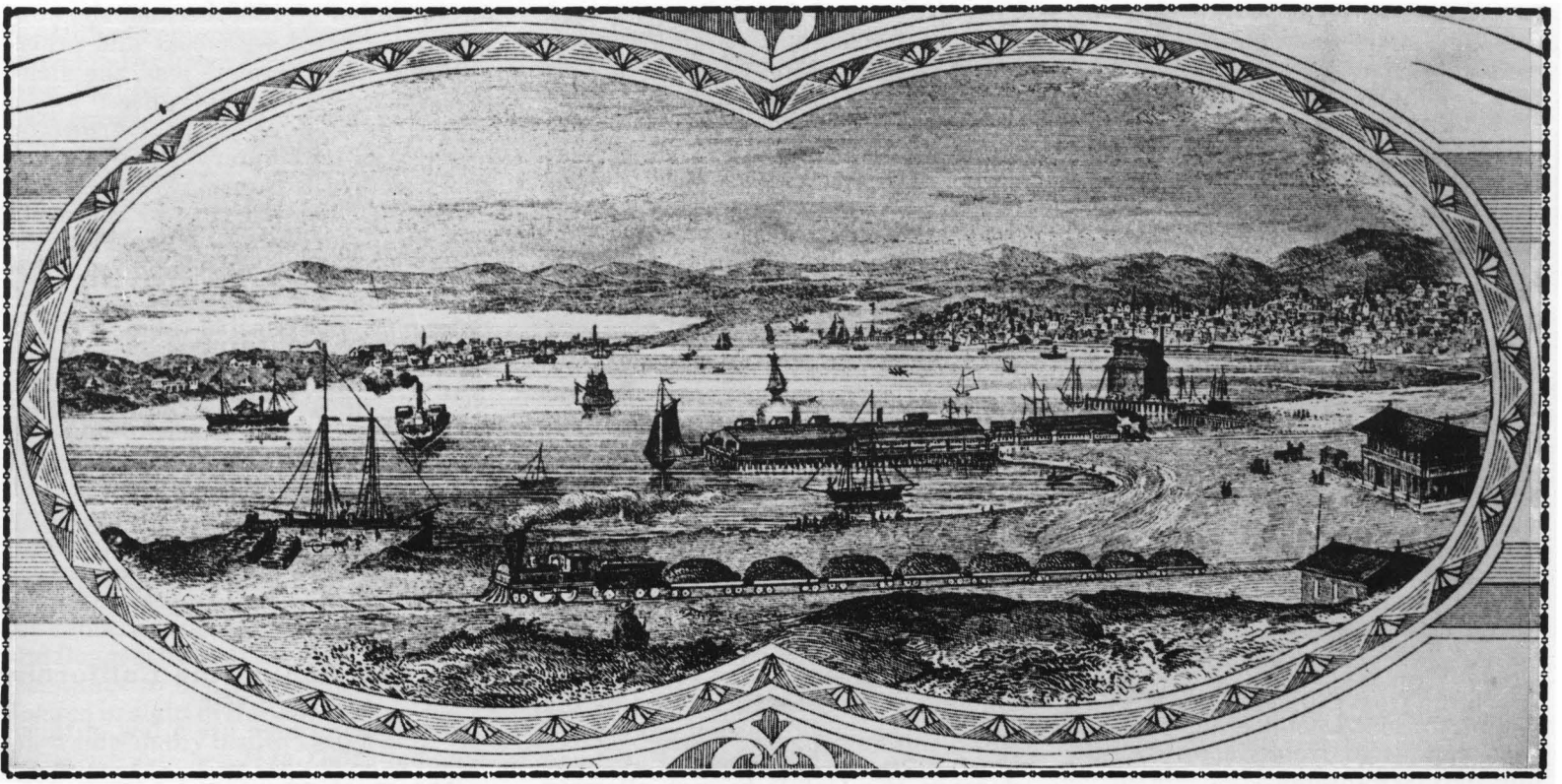
Gertrude Winslow Hudson, in graciously allowed her interviews with Jane Fetterly and Lee Fountain to be recorded, is a native of Vallejo. She moved with her parents to the Winslow ranch in 1891, was graduated from Vallejo High School in 1909, and in the fall of that year began teaching in Gordon Valley. She taught in several Solano County schools, spent much time in Hawaii, and then returned to teach at Flosden School, later becoming its principal. Now retired, she resides in Napa.

Dr. C. Thomas Hosley, a past commodore of the Vallejo Yacht Club, is now its historian. After retiring from his position as vice president of Solano Community College, he and his wife have cruised as far as Alaska in their boat. His many talents include musical ability. He is an accomplished trumpet player.

Thomas Lucy, a historian at the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum, specialized in Vallejo history. He is head of cataloguing and accessioning for the Museum as well as curator of the photographic collection.

Sue Lemmon, our Society's present president, in 1963 relieved E.D. Wichels to become Administrative Assistant to the Mare Island Shipyard Commander. After retiring from this position in 1975, she has served as yard Historian, and with Wichels has been collecting and identifying the thousands of photographs, letters, documents, and artifacts relating to Mare Island's history. With Wichels she has co-authored *Sidewheelers to Nuclear Power* and *St. Peter's Chapel*.

Matthew Fountain, a retired research chemist, is treasurer of Solano County Historical Society.



THE CALIFORNIA PACIFIC RAILROAD

By Thomas Lucy

View from South Vallejo showing the pride and joy of the community, the California Pacific Railroad and the Vallejo grain elevator.

On July 18, 1868, one hundred and thirty ships were on the high seas out of European ports bound for San Francisco Bay for the purpose of loading grain¹ Vallejo, because of the California Pacific Railroad, had the advantage over other cities on the Bay for being the deep water port for the grain trade, which amounted to thousands of tons during the grain season, much of which was grown in Solano County.

The California Pacific Railroad was incorporated in 1865. A visionary, D.C. Haskin, by energy and perseverance interested capitalists in investing in the company. Haskin was the general manager of the railroad during the years of its construction.

Beginning at South Vallejo in December 1866, work on the California Pacific Railroad, sometimes called the Vallejo and Sacramento Road and affectionately called the Cal P, progressed rapidly. By May 1867 there were 350 men and 100 teams working between South Vallejo and Suisun. Day and night gangs dug a tunnel, 407 feet long, at Bridgeport, which was 15 miles from Vallejo. The tunnel is still there.

For several years Vallejo newspapers recorded the arrival of ships at Vallejo docks and listed their cargos which were required for the building of the railroad. On August 3, 1867, there were seven cargos of iron at sea bound for Vallejo. Typical entries for these years — "The clipper ship *Oracle* arrived from Cardiff with 1461 tons of iron, enough for 16 miles of track" and "The *Ne Plus Ultra*, Gardner Colby

and *Sardis* are a part of a fleet due with supplies for the Cal P."

There was considerable concern and opposition to the building of the Cal P. The San Francisco *News Letter* protested the fact that Vallejo was taking a material share of San Francisco's business and that share amounted to one-third of the wheat crop of California. The *Petaluma Journal* and *Argus* reported adversely to the formation of a company to construct an extension to the Cal P into Sonoma County. Petaluma had ambitions of having a grain shipping port either at the mouth of the Petaluma River or at Black Point. The *Journal* and *Argus* continued by warning San Francisco that Vallejo's ambition is manifestly counter to the best interests of San Francisco and Petaluma, and that once grain reached warehouses in Vallejo it will never touch a San Francisco wharf but will go direct from Vallejo to New York, Liverpool or China!

Another source of opposition to the Cal P was the California Steam Navigation Company which ran a fleet of river boats on the inland waters. It spent thousands of dollars and caused bushels of letters to be written to the East Coast to delay and prevent the sale of company bonds.¹¹

The most vicious opposition came from the Central Pacific Railroad. Having made up its mind to purchase the Western Pacific Railroad which ran from Sacramento to Oakland, the Central Pacific wanted the Vallejo project squelched beyond resurrection. The

Central Pacific during that period was deeply involved in building the trans-continental railroad and was in no position to take any action against the Cal P.¹² Their day would come later.

On March 23, 1868, the Cal P had on hand four locomotives, twelve passenger cars and one hundred freight cars¹³. The newspapers of northern California, with few exceptions, supported Vallejo as the rail terminus and grain depot for the grain trade. The *Sacramento Union* reported that as a grain depot Vallejo had many advantages over San Francisco and that Vallejo was the natural terminus of a railway system for all the region north of Suisun, San Francisco and San Pablo Bays.¹⁴

Freight and passenger service to Fairfield-Suisun with a connecting boat to San Francisco was inaugurated on June 29, 1868¹⁵. In a notice to farmers in Solano County the Cal P announced that it was prepared to carry 500 tons of grain per day and all other freight they may offer.¹⁶

By July 18th the track was laid to and beyond Vaca Station (Elmira)¹⁷ and to Dixon on August 8th.

The railroad reached Davisville (Davis) on September 12, 1868. A connecting stage drawn by a team of six horses was provided between Davisville and Sacramento during the period the tracks were being laid between those two places.¹⁹

In September 1868, the citizens of Vallejo forwarded a petition to the United States Senate and House of

Representatives requesting that the City of Vallejo be made the western terminus of the Pacific Railroads and a Port of Entry. The petition listed the disadvantages of Oakland, San Francisco and other places in the Bay Area as a rail terminus and of course the advantages of Vallejo.²⁰

The cars of the Cal P reached Washington, across the river from Sacramento, in November 1868²¹. The Central Pacific had the clout to prevent the Cal P from crossing its tracks to enter Sacramento proper. More on this later.

On January 20, 1869, the steamer *New World*, well-known in California's early days, commenced her semi-daily trip from South Vallejo to San Francisco. *New World*, which replaced slower boats that had been operating since June 1868,²² was purchased by the Cal P in April 1869 and was then operated by the railroad²³.

An announcement was made on April 1, 1869, that the Cal P had purchased the Napa Valley Railroad, which ran from Calistoga to Suscol. In January 1869 a connecting line had been completed from Suscol to Adelante (Napa Junction).²⁴

When the Cal P reached Woodland on June 29, 1869, it was greeted by the firing of 100 guns.²⁵ A night train was added in July to carry the immense quantities of grain and freight over the route.²⁶

On August 28, 1869, the train boat combination set a record of three and one half hours between Washington and San Francisco. The time included all stoppages, nine in number, and the delay occasioned by changing from cars to the steamer *New World*.²⁷

When the Cal P reached Marysville in February 1870, Vallejo was the deep water port and rail terminus for Solano,

Yolo, Napa and Lake Counties and much of the Sacramento Valley.

The success of the Cal P can be seen in the following statistics; in July 1869, 22,751 passengers were carried on the train, in August, 23,893 and in September, 24,335 for an average of 780 per day²⁸. A typical amount of grain carried to South Vallejo weighed 540 tons per load and so large a number of beef and cattle were carried to South Vallejo on September 14, 1869, that the freight boat to San Francisco could not carry them all.²⁹

When the transcontinental railroad was completed in May 1869, passengers had three means of traveling on to San Francisco. They could go by river boat which could take up to seventeen hours. Another way was by Western Pacific which ran from Sacramento to Oakland, a trip of nine hours.³⁰ The public preferred the Cal P, with its connecting boat, a trip of four hours. Three fourths of all passengers and a considerable amount of freight were carried by the Cal P³¹. The public was not unaware of the efforts of the Central Pacific to damage the Cal P by not allowing anyone on its trains to check baggage on the Vallejo Road, or to circulate maps, time tables or information relating to the Cal P, and as we have seen it would not let the Cal P trains into Sacramento.³²

The Cal P purchased the steamer *Orient* in October 1869 to take the place of *New World*. The Cal P announced that the *Orient*, renamed *D.C. Haskin*³³, would shorten the time between Sacramento and San Francisco by one hour.³⁴ *Haskin*, however, foundered in the Gulf Stream on the way to Vallejo

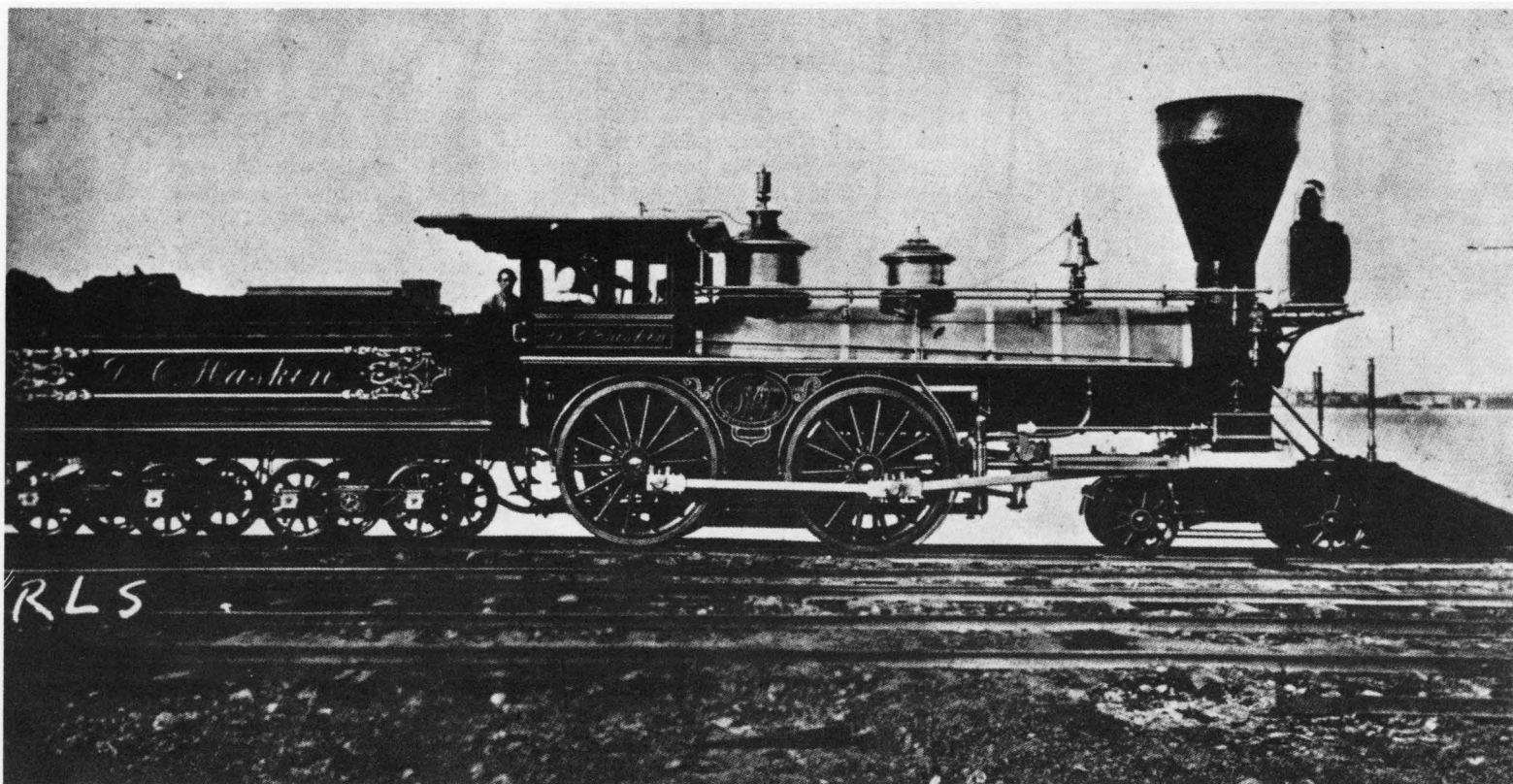
on November 17, 1869, because she was heavily laden with coal and other material³⁵. A complete loss, the steamer was covered by insurance.³⁶

The *Vallejo Evening Chronicle* announced on January 31, 1870, that the California Supreme Court had decided in favor of the Cal P allowing the railroad to cross the Central Pacific's tracks and enter Sacramento. Hundreds of people along the tracks in Solano County cheered the first train, decked out in flags and bunting, on its way to Sacramento. Hundreds more in Sacramento witnessed the arrival of the first train to enter the city. Firemen marched, headed by a brass band, while a dense crowd broke out in cheers, loud and frequent as the train crossed the Central Pacific's tracks. The Cal P's popularity was due to its persecution by the Central Pacific.³⁷

The Men Behind the California Pacific

The following men are a few of those who built the Cal P.

The most prominent person connected with the Cal P during its early years was D.C. Haskin. Haskin gave his home as Vallejo and his occupation as contractor³⁸. He owned a considerable amount of property in Vallejo, and along with John Frisbie donated property for the first public school in South Vallejo. Haskin sold his interest in 1871 and left for the East Coast where he formed a company in 1873 to build the first tunnel under the Hudson river from Jersey City to New York. He eventually abandoned the project.^{39, 40} The Cal P. named the previously mentioned



The D.C. Haskin Engine and Tender on the South Vallejo Waterfront in 1872

FAVORITE SHORT ROUTE TO SAN FRANCISCO,



VIA VALLEJO, CALIFORNIA PACIFIC R. R. AND STEAMER NEW WORLD.

80 MILES SAVED in distance from Marysville to San Francisco, and THREE HOURS in time.
52 MILES SAVED from Sacramento to San Francisco.

Two Express Trains Daily, (except Sunday) each way, carrying U. S. Mail and all Fast Express. On Sunday one Express each way.

GOING SOUTH.

Morning Express Train, { Leaves Marysville at 6 A. M. Sacramento at 7.15 A. M. and Callstoga 7.30 A. M., arriving in San Francisco at 11.30 A. M.
Afternoon Express Train, { Leaves Marysville at 1.00 P. M., Sacramento 3.15 P. M. and Callstoga 2.45 P. M., arriving at San Francisco at 7.30 P. M.

GOING NORTH.

Steamer New World, { Leaves her berth, Front Street Wharf, San Francisco, at 8 A. M., connecting at Vallejo with Cars of California Pacific Railroad, by which Passengers arrive at Sacramento at 12.30 P. M., Marysville at 2.15 P. M., and Callstoga at 12.45 P. M.
(MORNING CONNECTION.)
Steamer New World, { Leaves San Francisco at 4 P. M., by which passengers reach Sacramento at 8.20 P. M., Marysville 9.30 P. M., and Callstoga 7.45 P. M.
(AFTERNOON CONNECTION.)

SUNDAY TRAINS AND BOAT.

Sunday Express Train, { Leaves Marysville at 10.15 A. M., Sacramento 2.30 P. M., and Callstoga at 3.00 P. M., arriving at San Francisco at 6.45 P. M.
Steamer New World, { Leaves San Francisco at 8.30 A. M., passengers arriving at Vallejo at 10.15 A. M., Sacramento 12.45 P. M., Marysville 5 P. M., and Callstoga 12.40 P. M.
ON SUNDAYS, { Returning, leaves Vallejo on arrival of trains from Sacramento, Callstoga and Marysville at 5.00 P. M., arriving at San Francisco at 6.45 P. M.

PASSENGERS taking the Morning Express Train from Marysville at 6 A. M., Sacramento 7.15 A. M., and Callstoga 7.30 A. M., arrive in San Francisco at 11.30 A. M., giving them nearly four hours in the city. Returning at 4.00 P. M., and reaching Sacramento at 8.20 P. M., Marysville 9.30 P. M., and Callstoga 7.45 P. M., of the same day.

FREIGHT for Sacramento, San Francisco, Vallejo, Marysville, Callstoga, Napa, Davisville, Knight's Landing, Woodland, and all Way Stations, taken through as low as by any other route.

R. S. MATTISON,

General Superintendent.

J. P. JACKSON,

President.

L. C. FOWLER, General Passenger and Freight Agent.

steamer and a locomotive in honor of Haskin and John Frisbie named one of his schooners Haskin.⁴¹

John Frisbie was a stockholder and at one time vice president of the company. (See Solano Historian Vol. I No. 1).

Edward H. Green, vice president of the London and San Francisco Bank, was a large stockholder in the Cal P, other railroads, and was the largest stockholder in the Vallejo Savings and Commercial Bank. Green, wealthy in his own right, was married to the infamous Hetty Green. The author, Arthur Lewis, wrote that Hetty "through penury, forgery, perjury, ruthlessness and financial genius became the richest and most detested woman in the United States."⁴²

Julius May and Rudolf Sulzbach were from Frankfort-on-Main. They served on the Board of Directors of the Cal P, in 1871. May and Sulzbach were two of the leading money kings behind the King of Prussia in the Franco Prussian War of 1870⁴³. Locomotives on the Cal P were named London and Frankfort in deference to German and English investors.

Milton S. Latham, ruler of the London and San Francisco Bank, a former governor and senator, was the power behind the Cal P in the early 1870's⁴⁴.

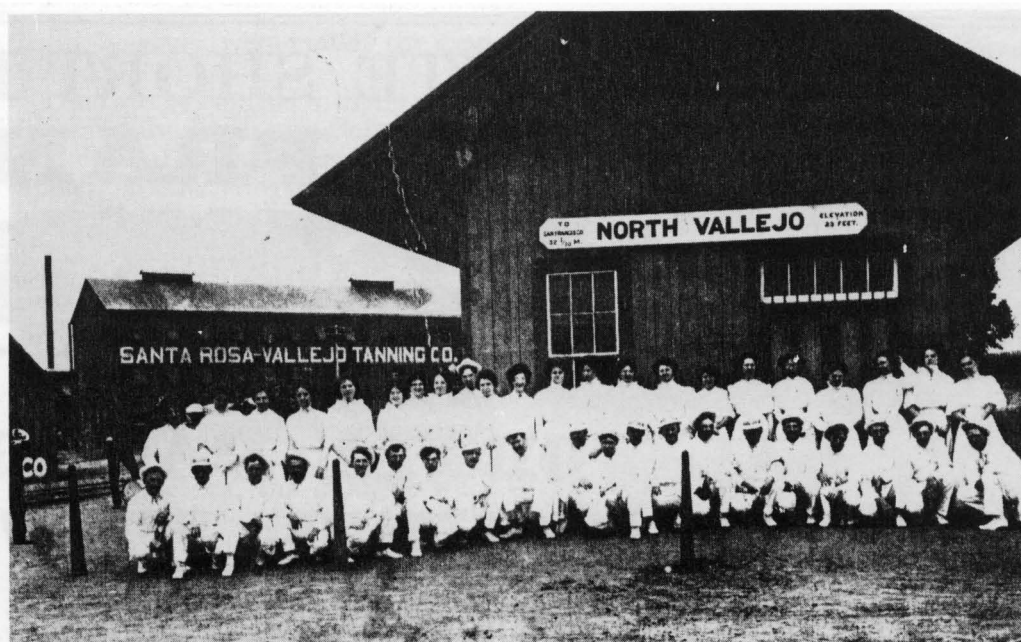
Others left their names on South Vallejo Streets. They were D.W.C. Rice, M.D. of San Francisco, James Ryder, a manufacturer from New York, A.D. Starr who founded the Starr Mills, James Lemon, a contractor and F.D. Atherton.

Locomotives were named Rice and Ryder. Frisbie, Rice, Haskin and Ryder were also on the Board of Directors of the Vallejo Elevator.⁴⁵

The Impact of the California Pacific on Vallejo

In voter registration Vallejo was eighteenth in the state in 1864, seventh in 1869, and third in September 1871⁴⁶. The growth of Vallejo was due to the Cal P. Vallejo became the most admired city in the state. The *Contra Costa Express* reported "Vallejo was like a dreary desert. What is it now? A busy, thriving, toiling, marching on, largely expanding town, enterprise in, enterprise around, and enterprise everywhere⁴⁷." The Oneida, N.Y. *Dispatch* copied a letter from a correspondent who said "Vallejo is the liveliest place I have seen this side of the Sierra Mountains."⁴⁸

Other than the railroad, South Vallejo had the Starr Mills, the Vallejo Grain Elevator and the railroad shops, which built passenger, freight and flat cars for the Cal P and other railroads⁴⁹. Locomotives were repaired in the shops. The Heald and McCormick Machine Works, Barnes and Company



The smaller print on the North Vallejo Station sign reads "TO SAN FRANCISCO 32 1/10 M" and "ELEVATION 23 FEET." Can any of our readers identify the white clad and white shod group?

Planning Mill, and the large Pope and Talbot Lumber Yard were located in South Vallejo. There were several hotels built in South Vallejo to accommodate the thousands of passengers traveling through. The largest, the Frisbie House, was a facsimile of the Capital Hotel in North Vallejo. The Frisbie House was built by J.W. Haskin.⁵⁰

Despite hard times elsewhere, Vallejo continued to surge ahead. In March 1870, it was reported that no less than sixty-six buildings, large and small, public and private were in the course of erection within the city proper and in South Vallejo.⁵¹

In San Francisco, one sale of lots contiguous to the Cal P Depot brought in \$50,000, the price ranging from \$200 to \$460.⁵²

The Expansion of the California Pacific

In March 1871 the Cal P purchased the boats of the California Steam Navigation Company. Included in the purchase were eleven sidewheel steamers, thirteen stern-wheelers, and forty barges, along with wharves at San Francisco, Sacramento, Alviso, Stockton, Benicia, Suscol, Suisun, and other places on inland waters.⁵³

Articles of Incorporation were filed on December 24, 1869, combining the Cal P Extension Company and the Cal P Railroad. The stated purpose was to extend the Cal P to Petaluma, Healdsburg, Cloverdale, Santa Rosa, and Bodega Corners, making the total length of the Cal P 247 miles.⁵⁴

A competing railroad, the San Francisco and Northern (Donahue Line) was being built in Sonoma County. On New Year's Day 1871 service was inaugurated from Donahue to Santa

Rosa. It appeared all was well with the Donahue Line in its expansion north from Santa Rosa, but the Cal P was determined to go ahead in Sonoma County and make Vallejo the deep water port and rail terminus for Sonoma and Mendocino Counties.

The English capitalists backing the London and San Francisco Bank demanded that Vallejo donate \$100,000 before starting the Sonoma project. Vallejo refused, but John Frisbie did so, to further promote the city he founded.

In its expansion northward the Donahue Line hired Irishmen as graders. They could not compete with Chinese graders hired by the Cal P who were building an embankment parallel to the Donahue Line. The Cal P had 400 Chinese graders at work with another 600 on the way. They were grading a mile a day. Seeing that it could no longer compete, the Donahue Line gave up and sold out to the Cal P.^{55, 56, 57}

The Cal P then put two survey parties to work to find the best route to connect the newly purchased Sonoma railroad to its line in Solano County. One party surveyed a route from Suscol to Petaluma and another from Napa Junction to Donahue.⁵⁸

The Cal P was now a large organization. In March 1871 Incorporation papers were filed by the Cal P to build a railroad through Beckworth Pass, California, to meet the Union Pacific in Ogden, Utah.⁵⁹

The Cal P which up to this time was an embarrassment to the Central Pacific was now a threat.

The Sale and Wreckage of the California Pacific

In July 1871 the Central Pacific made an offer to purchase the Cal P, but it

was refused. The Central Pacific then announced that it would run a parallel track to the head of Suisun Bay and cross the Carquinez Straits at Benicia.^{60, 61}

The Cal P caved in. It was announced on August 2, 1871, that the sale of the Cal P to the Central Pacific had been consummated.⁶² The Cal P in spite of its success had its weakness. The right of way was largely unfenced, sidings few, and stations insufficient. The roadbed was almost wholly unballasted and had few ties. Embankments were so narrow that the ends of the ties projected on both sides. The slopes of the cuts were insufficient. The Cal P had a debt of \$8,450,000 which was more than the company could absorb.⁶³

New Central Pacific timetables gave passengers two choices of traveling between San Francisco and Sacramento, one via Vallejo and the other via Oakland.

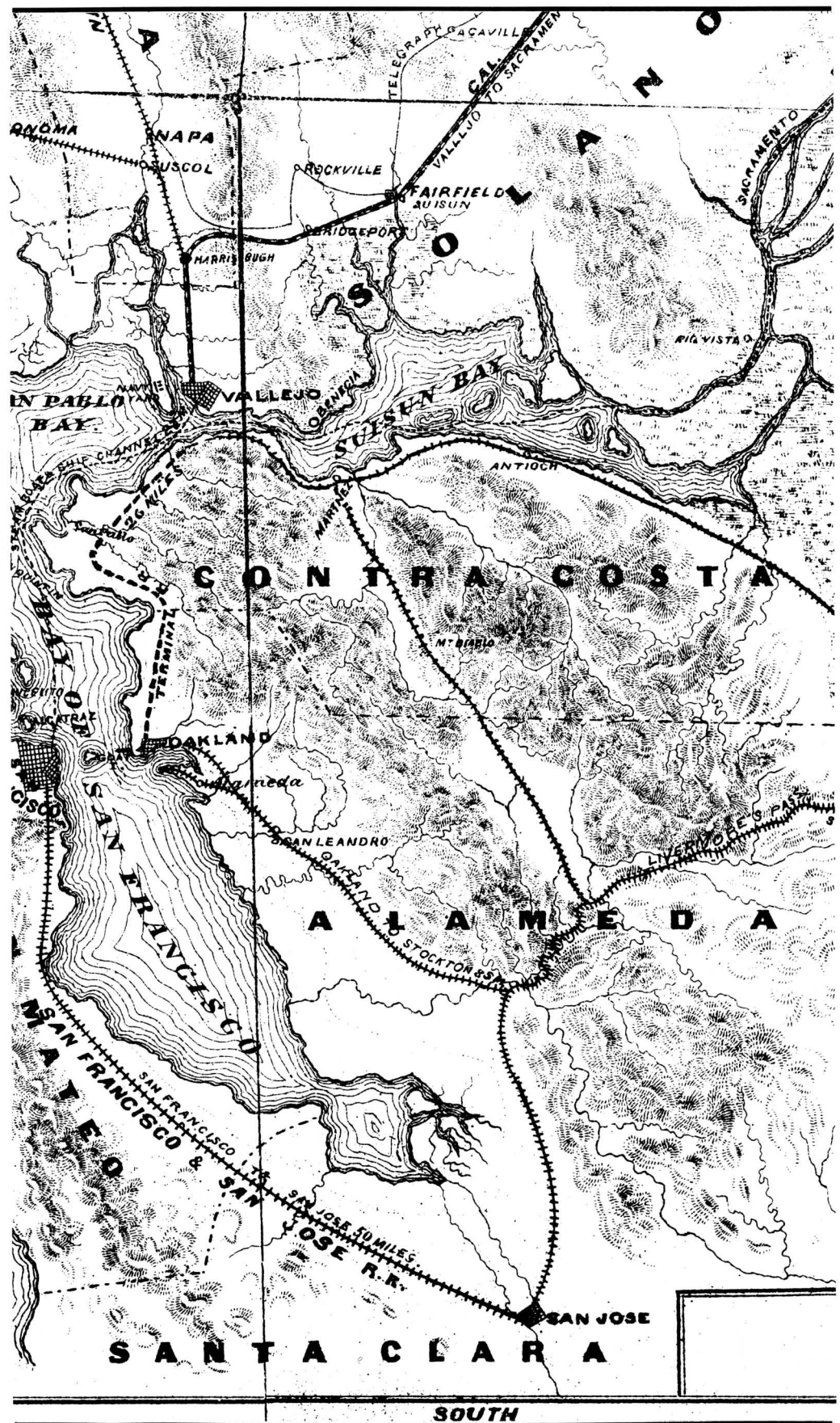
The Cal P was soon in shambles. The winter of 1871-1872 was one of the wettest on record. Much of the track between Vallejo and Sacramento and Marysville was washed out; tracks were flooded in the Napa Valley; and the train bridge across the Napa River was declared unsafe.⁶⁴

Section employees were laid off, railroad shops, foundries and smitheries in South Vallejo closed, and the trains stopped running. The line was in a deplorable condition.⁶⁵

When the waters receded in April, the people serviced along the tracks asked "When are the repairs to the Cal P going to be commenced?"⁶⁶ The Central Pacific appeared to be in no hurry to repair the tracks of the Cal P.⁶⁷ Eventually the Cal P tracks were repaired, but in 1879 the Central Pacific completed a seventeen mile branch from Suisun to Benicia, at which point it ferried an entire train across the straits to Port Costa, thus by-passing Vallejo with the great portion of its business. The railroad shops were moved to Sacramento.⁶⁸ All this along with the collapse of the Vallejo Elevator into the Bay in 1872 marked the end of Vallejo's prosperity. The population of Vallejo in 1880 was less than in 1870. The city would not recover for many years.

Perhaps the most dramatic way of presenting the decline of Vallejo is by comparing the following two reports. In November 1871 an article appeared in the San Francisco *Bulletin* on the sale of the Cal P to the Central Pacific. It read "Vallejo is growing and promises to be one of the most prosperous cities on the Pacific Coast"⁶⁹.

Then in 1880 Robert Louis Stevenson and his bride stayed overnight in the Frisby (Frisbie) House in South Vallejo. They were on their way to Mount St. Helena. He wrote "South Vallejo is typical of many California towns. It



This is a portion of a map of the California Pacific Railroad. An insert on that map states "From the peculiar topography of the State, this Road must be the western terminus of the Pacific Railroad, the southern terminus of the Oregon Railroad, and the trunk line for the entire northern half of California, all of Nevada, and part of Oregon."

was a blunder. A long pier, number of drinking saloons, a hotel of great size, marshy pools, and even at high noon the entire absence of any human face or voice—these are the marks of South Vallejo." Referring to their room in the

Frisby House he wrote "A place of fallen fortunes like the town. There was a view on a bit of empty road and a few dark houses. All about that dreary inn frogs sang their ungainly chorus."⁷⁰

From Ranch to Winslow Terrace Recollections of an early Vallejo

by Gertrude Winslow Hudson

One of the possessions of the Solano County Historical Society is a fine, old oil painting of the Good Templars Orphanage of Vallejo in the background, a large expanse of green meadow and garden in the foreground, and three widely separated farmhouses. It is one of these lovely old farmhouses that was the home of Gertrude Winslow Hudson for over forty years. And it is the life she lived there that she talks about so eagerly and so well in a series of oral histories she gave to Jane Fetterly, who now owns the home, and to Lee Fountain of the Solano County Historical Society. The house is no longer surrounded by green fields but is 42 Winslow Avenue in the midst of Winslow Terrace, just a few steps from Redwood Street, one of Vallejo's busiest thoroughfares. Mrs. Hudson began her memoirs by telling a bit about her parents before she describes her early years and the story of the house, built by the pioneer, George Greenwood.

My parents both came from Fall River, Massachusetts, although they did not know each other there. My mother was only a year and a half old when she was brought here by her family. Of course they came by ship to Panama, crossed the Isthmus on mule back, and then boarded another ship to complete the journey to San Francisco. The family bought its first property down on Napa Road near where the Teicheiras lived. My father came by the same tortuous route from New England to California, but he came in his late teens. At first he lived in Benicia and when he was actually courting my mother, he walked the seven miles from Benicia to Vallejo to see her.

I remember my father telling about how his family had lived on the Taunton River on property that had been surveyed by Miles Standish. He recalled how each of these holdings was fifty acres and brought with it fishing rights so the owner could catch all kinds of fishes and eels for his winter food supply. But when my father came here he didn't fish much; he worked as a butcher and as a drover — he had a wonderful pair of dapple grays that he drove when he worked for Wells Fargo.

Early I remember his telling stories about having to transport to Benicia the bodies that had been stored in the mausoleum because of inclement weather. Then when the roads became passable, it was his job to get up at three o'clock in the morning to take the caskets to Benicia for burial, so people

didn't have to see them transported in such an inelegant manner, stacked one upon the other.

But that wasn't an important part of my childhood. I really have nothing but good memories of growing up on the ranch. We were always busy, always had all kinds of friends and relatives around, lots of parties, frequent trips, and much great food, most of which we raised.

The old ranch house was built in 1860 or 61 by the George Greenwood family

who lived there, miles from the heart of the town of Vallejo for over thirty years until it was purchased by our family that lived there for over another sixty years. We were always good friends with the Greenwoods who came out to the ranch all the time. My aunt had married one of the oldest then. There were two Greenwood men — John who had a place down near the Knight's Airport and then George, who built the house. In a place like Vallejo it was unusual for a house to have only two owners in a space of one hundred years, but perhaps more unusual was the fact that both owners were skillful gardeners and were devoted to keeping the "home place" a green oasis on the barren hills of north Vallejo.

Mr. George Greenwood originally



Bird's eye view of Vallejo from Mare Island. The Winslow Ranch is one mile west of the Orphanage, the large building in the far distance.

had landscaped the grounds close to the house and Mrs. Greenwood had put in a large rose garden that was on what is now the home and property of Judge Healy; and scores of trees were planted that not only protected the house but also yielded luscious fruit and nuts. The basic landscaping was good and everything seemed to prosper and grow easily.

Actually most essential things are much the same now in 1987 as when I lived there. Jane (Fetterly) has shored up the walls and leveled the floors but it is much the same as I remember it; except when we moved there, there were ten rooms and no bathrooms. But we put in bathrooms. Actually the downstairs bathroom now was the Greenwoods' first dining room. They had seven children, I think, and the dining room became too small for a growing family. So they added a new kitchen and pantry and cook's room so the old kitchen became the family dining room. That is why there is a stairway out of the dining room. It used to go from the old kitchen to the attic where Greenwoods Chinese cook slept. We never had a Chinese cook, but we did have hired men who used it on occasion. Many years later when I made an apartment upstairs I opened up the attic to be part of the regular house. I lived upstairs and my mother lived downstairs during the last few years before we moved to Napa.

When I was little, my uncle lived with us and he was the gardener. He cared for the roses — Mrs. Greenwood's Dutch roses. It was a beautiful rose garden. I did do a lot in the garden

while I was there but most things were already growing lustily. When we moved there, there was a big orchard, four or five acres north of the house — peaches, pears, apricots, and figs. There were oranges, walnuts, and almonds, acres of them. Down in front of the house where there are just houses now — Winslow Terrace — there were five or six acres of vineyard, just table grapes. Muscats, Sweetwaters, Tokays, all we could use and then we sold some. The vineyard went from the field close to the house all the way across to the big highway — actually Highway 29.

One Japanese family brought us some yellow plums and we planted them. We let them grow like a forest out by the barbecue. They bloomed wildly, just like a snow storm. Then there were big Hungarian prunes that grew just as vigorously.

First we had about 165 acres but then we sold the property that now is where Kaiser Hospital is. We ended up with sixty acres. Later my mother sold all but nine acres and this is what is now Winslow Terrace.

In 1900 there were only a few neighbors and there was nothing between us and the Orphans Home except the fields where the Orphans Home's herd of cows was kept. There were some Italian gardens on the other side of our house — toward town. I remember the Encertis; they had five or six children, younger than we were.

We did plant some things, but I do know there certainly have been a lot of cuttings and plants that have gone out of that yard to make other Vallejo gardens. I know one thing, we were



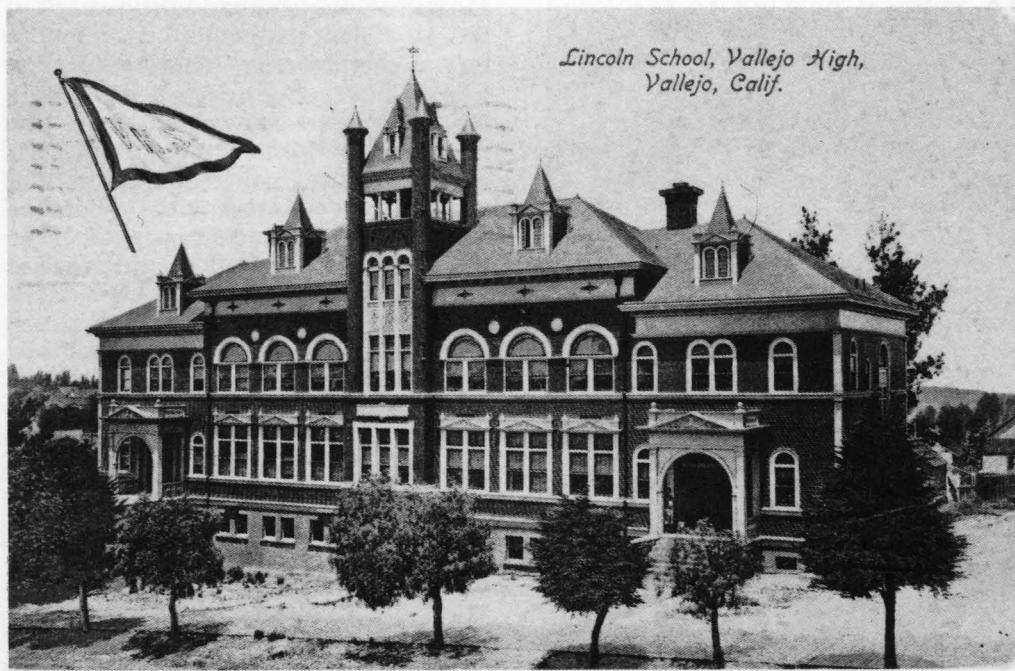
Gertrude Wilson at age three

never without flowers for our dining room table the year round. I remember that my mother once said to my daughter, "When I die I want you to get something from the old garden for my funeral." (By this time the house had been sold to the Fetterlys.) But it was in the middle of December when she died, at 103, and it was raining but my daughter went to the old house and found the jasmine that was blooming between the corner of the dining and living rooms. She gathered lots of greens and the lovely fresh jasmine so that we were able to make a lovely spray for my mother's casket. She was able to have something from her garden after all.

I guess I did plant some things, — I planted the magnolia; and mostly I brought in epiphyllums (orchid cacti). I planted the redwood trees, too, when I was young. We did plant the almond trees, too. That big old pepper tree was there in the garden when we moved in — and when I was a girl a man from U.C. came once and told us it was the biggest pepper tree in California.

Our road ran from the house down to the railroad tracks, and that road was lined with cypress trees, beautiful trees, and two huge pine trees right by the house. And by this time the house was in the middle of a nine acre plot and pine trees lined both sides of the land. It really was a beautiful place all right.

When I was fourteen or fifteen the house across the field from us — a house quite similar to ours, had pine trees like ours but one day they caught fire and trees and house were burned in no time.



High school classes were held in the second story.

So my father had men come in and cut down the pines close to the house. Then my mother had him plant black walnuts and the olive trees too. There really are many things growing in that yard that are over one hundred years old.

We had a vegetable garden too, — carrots, onions, squash, pumpkins. We also had kittens and turkeys and ducks and geese and collies. My mother canned hundreds of jars of fruit—under the house is a cellar that was lined with wooden shelves — and wooden doors on top that lifted up. It was filled with canned fruit. And the closet under the front stairs was always filled with all kinds of jelly.

I remember when my father decided to extend the vineyard. He had taken in a hired man who had had a streak of bad luck and my father put him to work on the new vineyard. One of the problems the man had was booze. He seemed to nip at the bottle a lot. When the lines were laid out and the stakes driven for the new grapes all seemed fine, but the man kept taking little drags from his bottle. It was soon evident he hadn't been able to follow the straight lines set out. As the vines grew it became a family joke because the plants matured in a most peculiar design. No one in our family used alcohol nor did we make wine from the grapes but it was always evident to us when we looked at the vineyard what happened when one did drink.

Those roses I remember that were special were the big Lady Venture bushes out by the kitchen. There also was the spectacular Armandii Clematis. I tried to root it to bring with me

here but I wasn't successful.

We really never had lots of money —my father bought and sold cattle, and we raised and sold chickens and turkeys, but we did have a beautiful place to live in. We were a small, very tightly-knit family and every holiday we got together with aunts, uncles, and cousins. Thanksgiving was always our holiday. They, the relatives, all came to our house for Thanksgiving. And anyone who was alone was invited.

But now I have memories, beautiful memories.

Although the house is in the middle of town now, when I was a child, (I was born in 1890) — it was out in the country with only a few neighbors anywhere around. In fact it was so far out that we couldn't go in to Vallejo to go to school. My sister and I went to the Orphanage School which was up on the top of Mortgage Hill, that is what we used to call it, but the school was part of Vallejo Public School system; it was not run by the Good Templars.

There were two small school buildings on the Orphanage grounds in which they taught grades one through six. The teachers were Vallejo teachers. There were lots more orphans than ranch kids who attended classes. There was no distinction between the ranch children and the orphans; we played together and studied together and were all friends.

I remember in good weather, once a week they, the cooks at the Orphanage, always served us lunch picnic style out in that beautiful grove of eucalyptus trees that is still near the top of Mortgage Hill. I still recall they always served pickles. Somehow we didn't have pickles at home, chow chow and



At high school graduation.

relishes, yes, but we never seemed to have pickles. And those pickles were special.

One thing about the Orphanage school and the other schools, too, was the age of the teachers; they seemed terribly old to me. That was before forced retirement or pensions and it seemed the teachers taught until they literally fell in their tracks. I remember one elderly teacher, Charlotte Barry. She was a strange one. When she punished someone for wrongdoing, she punished everyone. If it were a girl she decided to punish, then all the girls had their hands slapped with a bamboo switch she kept for that purpose. If the offender were a boy, she would tweak or pull the short hairs on the back of his neck. And then all the boys got the same treatment. Then evidently she felt bad about the way she had treated the students; so the next day she would bring eggs and oranges as treats for everyone. She cooked the eggs on the top of the old pot-bellied stove that was in the middle of the room and each student could pick out what he wanted, an egg or an orange. I remember reading a story about a girl who died from appendicitis and it was rumored that some orange seeds she swallowed were responsible. So I always took an egg. But we all seemed to accept the treats in the spirit they were offered. This would happen two or three times a semester.



The home before the orchard took over.



Georgia street showing the electric intraurban train young Gertrude rode frequently.

Since there were between thirty and forty students in one room this was quite a project.

I was a grown woman when the Orphanage closed because of decreasing enrollment and a scandal about the death of one boy, but it truly was a good school and a good Orphanage. There was a nursery there, too, where they had lots of babies, and often when school was out, my friends and I would go over to the nursery to see the little babies. A maiden lady and a woman called Grandma Simmons took care of the little ones. They were just lovely to them, holding them and rocking them. The women didn't mind our coming over to visit the nursery.

Children could actually stay at the Orphanage until they were sixteen, but it seems they came and went rather frequently. When the boys left, they usually went to the Apprentice School, to the nearby farms to work, or they went to work on the railroad. The girls, if I remember correctly, sometimes went into domestic service.

We missed school quite often because there were epidemics at the Orphanage. Whenever a new child came in, it seemed a disease came with him—scarlet fever, diphtheria, or smallpox. As soon as the children came in, they were deloused and vaccinated but that didn't really keep the illnesses away. Whenever a contagious disease turned up, the administrator would have a large yellow flag flown from the cupola atop the main building. If the flag was flying, we knew we should stay home from school. I was always a good student and I loved school so it didn't bother me because it was easy to keep

up with the work. But do I remember those old vaccinations! The doctor took about an inch of your skin on your forearm, scraped it good with a little grater, then cut four small slits in the skin and rubbed the serum in. I had it done several times because the vaccination never took. Finally the doctor told my mother to forget it. "She is such a healthy animal she will never be sick," he said.

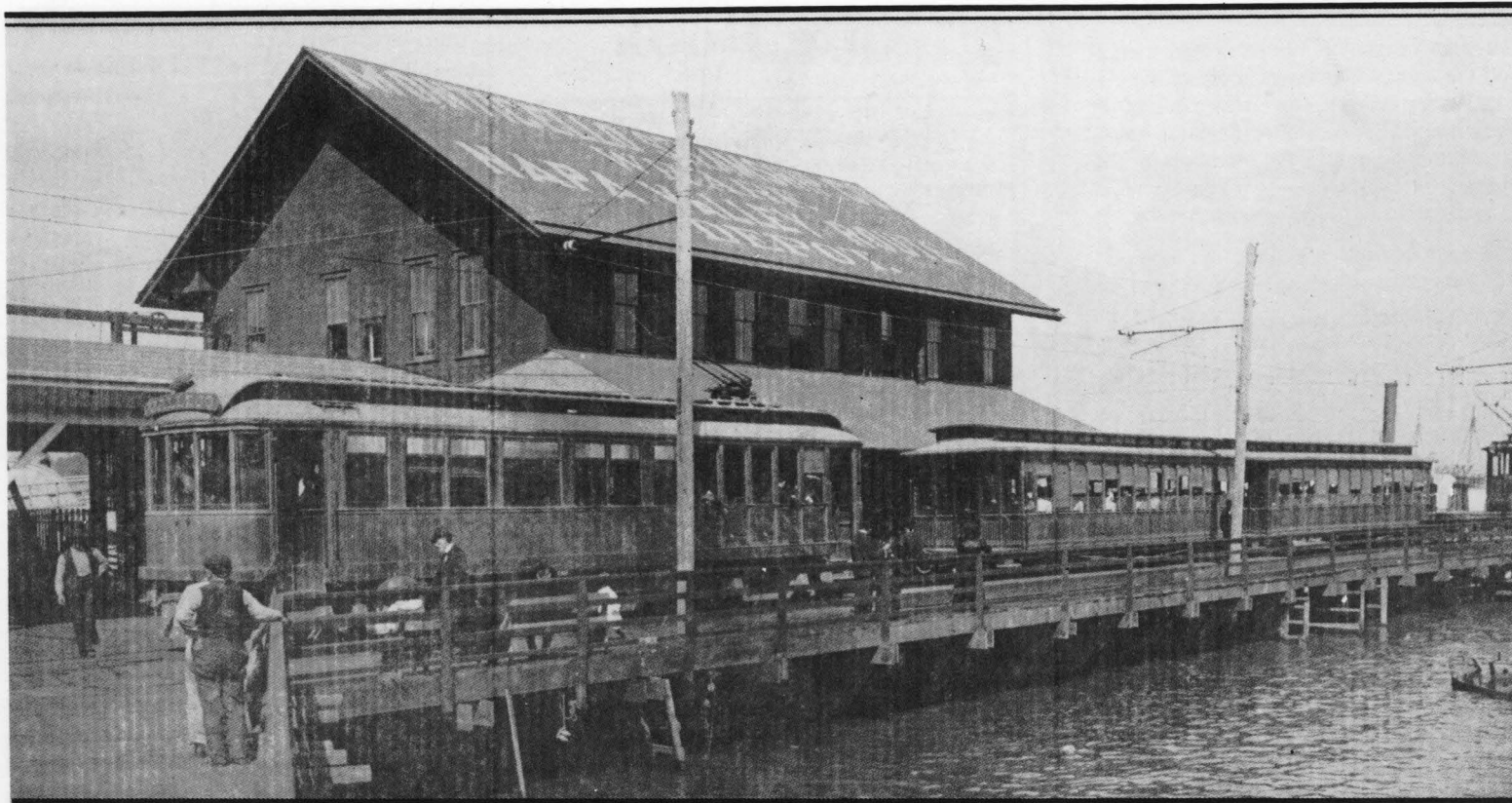
The orphans often had to work the same as children did around home. They worked with the cattle herd and other animals and did ordinary chores like housekeeping, table-waiting, and putting things in order.

When I finished the sixth grade, — that was as far as the school went then, — I was supposed to transfer to Lincoln School in town. But I didn't want to go. I didn't know any of the kids; I only knew the ranch kids around home or the Orphans; so I just didn't go. I stayed home until November and my mother let me. Then I finally decided to go. Actually the only town children I knew were my cousins, the Coopers, who lived in a big brown house by the Capitol Street stairs. They used to come out to the ranch all the time, especially in the summer.

Then when I was a little older, in high school, we used to go in to town frequently. One place we enjoyed was the library which was upstairs in the Farragut Building in the second block of Georgia Street. Friday nights we would walk into town, go to the library to read until the library closed and the librarian pushed us out. Her name was Gertrude Doyle. She had only one arm and she worked in the library forever, it

seemed. When she finally made us leave, — there wasn't anything else for us to do in town, — we took the electric street car home as far as it would go, 'to the old One Mile House. The street car waited for the last ferry from San Francisco and then it would make its final trip. When we got out at the One Mile House, we had to walk the rest of the way home. It was a long, dark road with no houses around. One night when I was walking alone I got to the familiar old osage orange tree when I saw two men coming down the path toward me. I met them on a little bridge and then they turned around and began to follow me. I knew the long, dark stretch ahead of me and I was trying to figure out what I could do when suddenly another man appeared coming down the path toward me. I was paralyzed with fear until I recognized it was my father who was coming to look for me. Needless to say, the pair who had been following me disappeared into the night.

We did have some stories passed around the family circle at home that kept us a bit on edge. One was the story of Greenwood's Chinese cook that had lived in the attic above the dining room stairs. One night, so the story goes, one of the Greenwood boys got up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom and he found the Chinese cook scrunched up against the wall, midway up the attic stairs. The next morning he was nowhere to be found and actually was never heard of again. A rumor had it that he had been out looking for the money Mr. Greenwood was supposed to have buried on his property. Lots of



In 1906 the electric interurban ran from Monticello Dock to Calistoga.

people were supposed to have buried money because they were afraid of banks.

Another story was told about Mrs. John Greenwood who lived on the big Greenwood place where Knight's Airport later was. She had gone by horse and buggy to Napa and when she was returning home, she was mysteriously shot. When her husband came home he found her dying and was himself tied up by two strange intruders. The local people mulled over the story and scandal for almost two years, when one of the men was caught. He confessed and implicated his companion who was soon apprehended. The pair confessed and summarily were hanged. It was then that the stories and rumors of scandal finally came to an end.

No rumor or folklore was as shaking an experience as the one I had when I was in high school. I graduated in 1909, so this would have been two or three years before that. In those days the high school was in the attic and the basement of Lincoln School while the chemistry and physics labs were in sheds across the street. During the noon hour we would often walk down town to window shop and see what was happening. One day while strolling near Marshall's, a big tea and coffee store, we saw a man coming out of Brownlie's Hardware Store, brandishing a new revolver he had just bought. He pointed the gun at us. We had enough sense to dash into Marshall's

store just as a bullet whizzed past my nose and embedded itself in the wall. I'll never forget it, and I vividly recall today the feel and the sound of that bullet so close to my nose and face. I don't think he took any more shots but the Vallejo police came and took him away. At that time Vallejo had three men on its force.

Shopping in Vallejo in those days was great. Stores were wall to wall from Sonoma down to the Georgia Street Wharf, both sides of the street. Levee's was a big, beautiful store. They had clothes, and china, and art, a real jewelry department store. The Levees were social friends of my parents. We all knew each other in those days. Besides Marshall's and Levee's there were Volmeys, White's Stationery Store where all the kids went to buy school supplies. Then there were all kinds of small stores, green grocer, bakeries, and a fish market. And, of course, there was Dannenbaum's Haberdashery.

There wasn't much to do in town so there were lots of parties, lots of visiting back and forth. Just for fun in the evening, if nothing was happening we would crank up the telephone and visit with the night operator. It was just a cozy chat. There was only one night operator at that time and it seemed to be all right.

We had lots of parties at our place because it was the biggest place around. My mother really didn't like us to go out to other places very much, but

she didn't care how many friends we brought home or how often they came. So we always had friends around. As children, we played the usual children's games, running games and baseball.

Harry Gee was very good at baseball. Often my friends would stay over night since we were so far from town. We even cooked in the middle of the night if we felt like it. One of our favorite things was to go on picnics, especially to Green Valley Falls. My father had a big wagon pulled by a pair of dapple-gray horses — he could take a whole group of people for trips and outings like that. Blue Rock Springs was a good place to go, also. We usually went there with our Cooper cousins. Many families moved out to Blue Rock Springs for the summer. They would pitch large tents out on the grounds and live there all summer. The women and children were out there all the time and the men came out at night after work. The Coopers, the Gorhams, the Winegars all did that. There were a few small cottages, but almost everyone lived in tents. We never stayed all night because we had more things to do at home than one could do at the Springs so we always went home. The Frisbies owned the hotel at the Springs at first, but when I was a girl the Madrids owned it. It really didn't seem public then. The sulphur water was piped so that it was available for every one to drink but there were no public baths as there

often are at hot springs. As I recall, there was an artificial lake where the kids swam— it was opposite the present day golf courses. There were rowboats there, too, as well as ducks and geese.

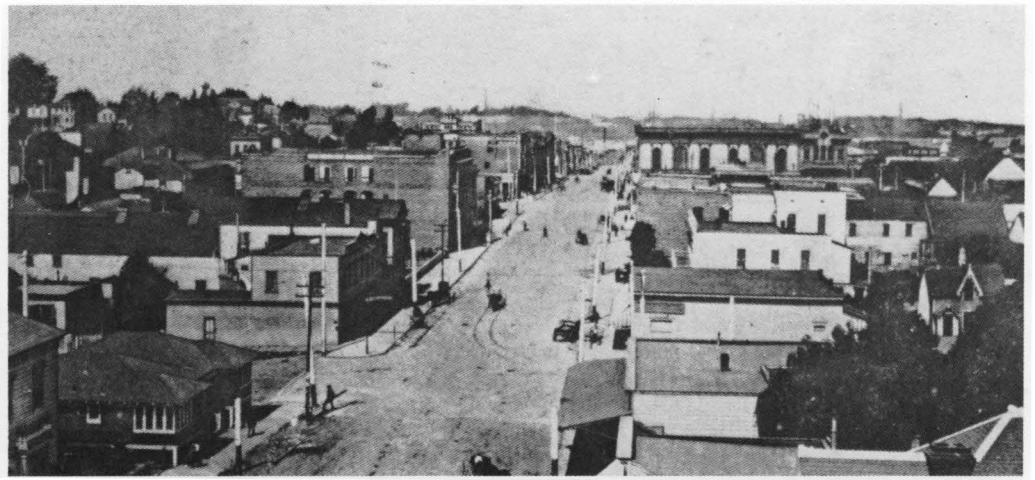
Holidays were great for us, —Thanksgiving was our day. Everyone came to our house on Thanksgiving. All the relatives came and each one brought something. We had so much food, it was sinful. There was always a big turkey, we raised our own of course, and always muscovy duck, potatoes, creamed onions, corn, waldorf salad, yellow turnips, always pies and at least three kinds of dessert, and whipped cream on top of everything. We would eat for about two hours, and then everyone would go outside for a walk, through the garden and in the fields until he felt comfortable and ready for another dessert.

Christmas we spent with one of my aunts and her family in Vallejo, and usually New Year's Day was spent with my other aunt if that family was in this country and not travelling. My uncle had been transferred from Mare Island to Hawaii. At home we always had a tree and gifts before we went out. Our presents were small, underwear or some article of clothing, but always books. We were all constant readers so books were always included. Our stockings when we were very small had oranges and candy in them. There were always real candles on the tree and one year my mother brought in a small pepper tree for the Christmas tree. It was a very pretty tree and it had that wonderful fresh, spicy aroma. We always had the tree in the dining room because that seemed to be the center of the house and where we always gathered.

Birthdays meant a cake and one present but no parties.

When we were in high school we had many parties, lots of them, and lots of surprise parties. As I said, there wasn't a lot for young people to do in Vallejo so there were lots of social type gatherings. We really played Post Office and Spin the Pipe. I remember one grand party at our house when I was a senior in high school. We had a barbecue. We barbecued corn on the cob, and after we ate all the corn we could we finished up with a watermelon feed.

Some of the parties were on Mare Island on Officers' Row where we had great fun playing Run sheep Run. All the homes had stables in the back for the horses and there was lots of space to run and hide. Most officers kept their own horses and some had a cow and chickens. The refreshments for our parties always seemed to be the same, always ice cream and cake. One of my friends was Reginald Venable, an



Georgia Street in 1907 where Gertrude spent her noon hours.

officer's son. He was a good friend and a good sport; he would dare anything and that attitude followed him all his life. We could keep track of him just because of that. After World War I when he was an officer returning from service in Europe he got himself into trouble. He was assigned to a flotilla of warships, but that didn't seem to bother him. When he heard that the woman he loved, Fay Bainter, a popular Hollywood actress, was herself headed for Europe, he changed his course and followed her. Naturally he was court-martialed and his career in the Navy abruptly halted. He never advanced past the rank of commander. I'll never forget the publicity that accompanied the episode. Josephus Daniels was the Secretary of the Navy and he summed up the whole affair by saying, "At least we know that chivalry is not dead."

There were twenty-four in my high school class, more girls than boys because the boys were allowed to drop out at fourteen. Most of them went to Apprentice School on Mare Island or directly to work there. But as soon as I graduated I took the Solano County Teacher's Examination and started teaching in Gordon Valley. The Solano County Teacher's Examination was considered very difficult compared to most county examinations, and if you passed Solano's test you could teach anywhere.

I taught in Gordon Valley in 1909 and retired from the Vallejo School system in 1961 after serving several years as principal at Flosden School. I enjoyed teaching, my pupils, my fellow teachers and my supervisors. I could talk about them for hours, but that is another story.



Brownlie's store where the revolver was purchased.



Oar, Power and Sail - A Brief History of the Vallejo Yacht Club

by C. Thomas Hosley

The Vallejo Yacht club has been a landmark in Vallejo and for yachtsmen of San Francisco Bay since the turn of the century. The Vallejo Yachting and Rowing Club was permanently organized at a meeting of fifty interested boaters which was held at the Labor Bureau Hall in Vallejo on April 27, 1900. A preliminary meeting had been held on April 11 at the Hook and Ladder House. William J. Wood, a master sailmaker at Mare Island Shipyard, was elected commodore; Adrien Eugene Chapman, manager of the Turner Shipyard and son-in-law of Captain Matthew Turner, vice commodore; M.H. Peck, recording secretary; Frank Dexter, financial secretary; Matthew Turner, measurer; James Lynn, port captain; T.V. Collins, treasurer. The board of directors was Guy Shirley, Jules Elmquest, Frank Fitzmaurice, William Kirkland, and George Warford.

The new club selected a site off the Virginia Street pier and started the construction of the clubhouse in 1901. All of the work was through volunteer labor by the club members. Architect Carl Siebrand, who had previously designed the Seattle Yacht Club's home, drew up the plans. Construction was under the direction of George Warford, carpenter in the U.S. Navy, with overall supervision by Commodore

Wood. Funds were raised by selling stock in the club at five dollars per share. As a further inducement, volunteers were granted one share for each ten hours of labor performed in erection of the building. Most of the stock credit issued went toward credit for dues.

R.A. Perry, superintendent of the Atlantic Gulf Construction Company, provided the piles, equipment and manpower to drive the piles to support the clubhouse. Perry was granted an honorary life membership for his contribution. The club construction was far enough along by April of 1901 to allow the club to invite the Corinthian Yacht Club of San Francisco and entertain them in great style with a luncheon, music and fireworks. On May 17, 1902, the San Francisco, Corinthian and California Yacht Clubs cruised to Vallejo in honor of the opening of the new Vallejo Yachting and Rowing Clubhouse.

The name, Vallejo Yachting and Rowing Club, reflects the interest in both yachting and rowing that goes back to the 1850s. Sailing and rowing contests were often held between the crews of ships in the Bay. Of course, boats of all types plied the waters of the Bay and the Sacramento River as these waters served as a major highway to the gold fields. Benicia was a major stopping place as was Vallejo.

Organized yachting commenced on San Francisco Bay with the formation of the San Francisco Yacht Club in 1869, only twenty-five years after the oldest U.S.A. club, the New York Yacht Club was formed. By 1869 when the Pacific Inter-Club Yachting Association was formed, only six yacht clubs were listed. They were Corinthian, Encinal, South Bay (Alviso), San Francisco, and two others, Pacific and California which no longer exist. Today, in 1987, the Vallejo Yacht Club is the fifth oldest club of the eighty-five clubs in northern California. There are currently four other yacht clubs in Solano County; Dixon Boat and Fishing Club (1949), Delta Marina Yacht Club, Rio Vista (1964), Solano Yacht Club, Suisun (1955), and Benicia Yacht Club (1977). In addition, there is a Benicia Sailing Club.

These early Bay Area clubs cruised to Vallejo, Napa, Martinez, Petaluma, and other areas during the 1880s and 90s. One Fourth-of-July cruise in the 1890s featured a race to Mare Island with the faster boats waiting for the slower boats to catch up. Then they raced up Napa Creek where a picnic, races, fireworks, and a dance were held.

Competitive rowing was a popular sport in the 1870s and 80s in two, four and six-oared sculls and gigs. Vallejo had three very active rowing clubs.



Vallejo Yacht Club harbor at time of YRA-Vallejo Race, May 3, 1986.

They were the Alert Boat Club, organized in 1872, the Excelsior Boat Club and the Farragut Boat Club of South Vallejo. The "Champion Colors" banner won by the Alert Club in 1874 hangs on the wall of the Vallejo Yacht Club. A fine example of a two-oared scull is the "Flirt," built in 1886 by W.A. Jones. The "Flirt" also hangs in the present clubhouse.

Many Mare Island workers used boats to cross the channel from Vallejo to Mare Island as an alternative to paying the ferry fare since there was no causeway to the Island. Races naturally resulted between the rowers which helped to develop the interest in recreational rowing. Tricks such as tying a rope to the dock with the other end nailed to the keel of a rival's boat were not unheard of. The sudden stop when the line drew taut no doubt was a moment of great merriment or consternation depending upon which boat one occupied.

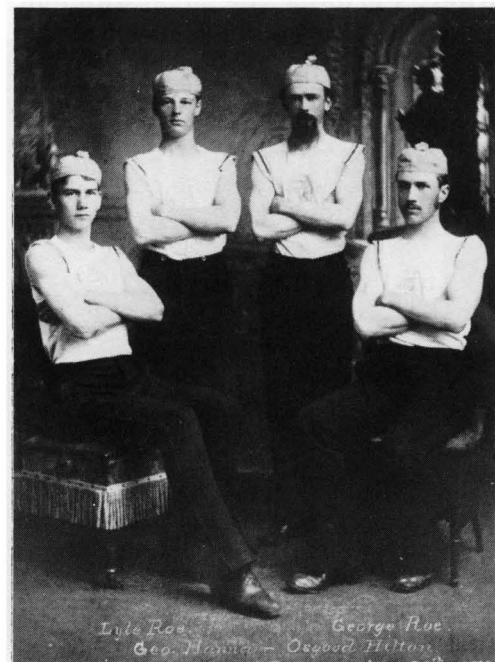
Competitive rowing in whaleboats between crews of naval ships at Mare Island was sometimes sponsored by the City of Vallejo. A cup for such a race was won by the crew of the armored cruiser "California" (later renamed the "San Diego") which was sunk off Long Island in 1918. The cup was retrieved by a diver in 1984. Rowing continued to be popular during the first decade of the twentieth century with Vallejo Yacht-

ing and Rowing Club members participation.

In the late 1890s and early 1900s the development of the gas and naphtha engines for small boats greatly expanded the range and flexibility of small boat recreational cruising and racing. Cruises to Vallejo, Napa and the Delta towns were popular. Cruises to the Vallejo Yachting and Rowing club both by sail and power became regularly scheduled events of the San Francisco yachting clubs, some of which scheduled as many as four cruises per year to Vallejo. These soon evolved into two-day affairs with cruises to Vallejo and sailboat races back to their home ports. PICYA eventually started coordinating the scheduling of racing and cruising schedules for all of the member clubs and published the schedules in Yachting Yearbook starting in 1924. The cruise to Vallejo and the race back home on the following day were soon firmly established as the first events of the yachting year. This tradition is still followed today with the two-day Vallejo Race as the season opener for all YRA (Yacht Racing Association) racers.

Among the early members of the yacht club, several stand out for their leadership and long service. A.E. Chapman was the first vice commodore in 1900 and served as commodore from

1901 to April of 1906 when he suddenly died from a burst appendix. As Captain Turner's son-in-law and shipyard manager he had been engaged in the building of yachts in Turner's shipyard. Turner's sailboat, "Gadder", had won the San Francisco Perpetual



This rowing team of the Alert Rowing Club defeated the Farraguts on Nov. 28, 1878. Left to right - Lyle Roe, George Hanna, Osgood Hilton.

Trophy in 1899 and lost the race in 1900. Chapman built "Helen" in 1901 and raced her in the San Francisco Perpetual Trophy Race of that year but lost to Lester Stone's "Presto." Both boats raced under the colors of the San Francisco Yacht Club but were listed under the Vallejo banner after 1901.

John P. Scully was a charter member who remained active until his death at age eighty. He was a Vallejo policeman. Scully became the financial secretary of the club in 1901 when Chester Shade was killed in an automobile accident. Scully served in this office until 1924 except for two years (1907-08) when he was commodore. He was also a photographer who carefully labeled his photos. Many of the valuable photographs of the first forty years of the club history were either taken by or identified by "Jack" Scully. He bought "Helen" after Chapman's death and she served as the club's flagship in 1907 and 1908.

Judge John A. Browne joined the club as an honorary member in 1901 and became a regular member in April 1902. He served as vice commodore from 1904 through 1906 taking over as active commodore in 1906 upon the death of Chapman. He also served as commodore in 1924. In 1903 he became club secretary and held that office, when he wasn't commodore or vice-commodore, until 1925. His careful recordings of membership lists, officer rolls and minutes written in his beautiful Spencerian handwriting have given us most of the early history of the Vallejo Yacht Club.

Many prominent Vallejo citizens were members of the club at one time or other. Perhaps the most famous member of all was Jack London, who joined the club in 1910. He remained a frequent visitor until his death. It has been said that he outfitted his boat



VYC's 1903 crew of D. O'Shea, John Corbett, Ed Lynch, Wm. Maher, J.S. Watson, and A. Morest rowed the six-oared Gig #2.

"Roamer" at the Vallejo Yachting and Rowing Club docks. He loved to play cards with George Hilton and other members of the club. Other long term early members were William Kirkland, who was the first recording secretary and served as measurer from 1903 to 1937, Captain Matthew Turner, who served as measurer from 1900 to 1902 and who also contributed the first flagpole for the new clubhouse, S.J. McKnight, a local banker who served as treasurer from 1902 to 1941, and Judge Frank Devlin, who served on the board of directors in 1901 and was largely responsible for developing the club's first by-laws.

During the eighty-seven years the club has been in existence sixty-four men have served as commodore. One member served as short as three months while A.E. Chapman's five and a quarter years was the longest term. For long term service to the club and leadership no one has come close to the record set by Clarence "Red" Fox. In 1987 he was honored as being the most

senior of all the past commodores of any yacht club on the west coast having first served as commodore sixty-five years ago in 1922. He joined in 1920 as a junior member at age twenty and two years later was elected as the youngest commodore in the history of the club. He served as commodore four times and held other offices. He was active until the 1970s. He was involved in building the ways and docks and helped supervise some of the work on the new clubhouse. Other longtime members are "Shorty" Yuravich who joined in 1922, Joe Schlosser in 1935 and LeRoy Taylor in 1935, all with over fifty years of service to the club.

Membership was limited to men as was common in yacht clubs until quite recently. Early house rules stated that ladies couldn't come into the club house unless accompanied by a member. However, ladies played an active role in the social affairs and cruises.

Prospective members were voted upon by using the "black-ball" method. A wooden box with two



VYC's 1903 crew of (left to right) J.P. Scully, J.A. Sancts, W.J. Corbett, and George Warford rowed the four-oared shell.



"Francis F" was built by Red Fox at the VYC Clubhouse in 1926-27.

chambers was designed for this purpose. A member reached into the open section and selected either a white or a black marble and slipped his choice into the secret covered section of the box. If, upon opening the covered section of the box, three or more black marbles appeared, the member was rejected, or "blackballed." The original box used for voting in this manner is in the collection of club artifacts. Election by majority vote of the members was finally adopted in July 1966 when the by-laws were changed largely over the issue of membership of Horace MacKerrow. He had been blackballed four times, although he was granted honorary membership in 1968. In the vote after the by-laws change, he became the first black member of the club and six years later was elected commodore. A junior membership category was established as early as 1909 with half-rate dues to encourage young people to participate in yachting. Honorary and life memberships were granted usually for special service or long service. Life membership is now granted to members with thirty-five years of membership or by board action for meritorious service.

Women were first recognized for membership in 1971 when female owners of yachts received "flag member" status for as long as they owned their boats. Widows of former life members could be "Feminine Associate Members." Finally, in 1975 in proposals by Tom Hosley and Wyman Riley these special categories were dropped to eliminate any discrimination as to race or sex. The by-laws were changed to allow women as regular members. Christy Huddle, a city planner for the City of Vallejo, became the first female regular member in 1976. In 1983 Carolyn Campbell was elected to the board of directors. Susan Lane was the first woman "Fleet Captain Sail" in 1976 and a member of the board of directors in 1987.

Until 1957, the ladies had no formal

status. In July 1957 the by-laws were changed to authorize a Ladies Auxiliary. The first president was Edna Brinkman. The Auxiliary was very active in the social affairs of the club with major responsibilities for the Christmas, Easter and Halloween parties as well as fashion shows and other activities. As one of its projects in

August 1976 it produced a cookbook titled "Down to the Sea in Pots." It was a popular item which sold for \$3.50. The Auxiliary membership dropped off in the late 1970s. A separate category for women was no longer needed when the "family membership was adopted in 1981. Married couples could be members with one-half vote each if they selected the family membership option. Much of the work formerly done by the Ladies Auxiliary is now done by committees of men and women participating together.

As a legal basis for operation, the Vallejo Yachting and Rowing Club was incorporated on March 7, 1902. The stated purposes were: "(1) complete the partly finished clubhouse; (2) promote interest in yachting, rowing and all aquatic sports; (3) hold and give regattas, meets and competitions of other characters, and to give prizes and awards and other inducements for same; (4) collect fees, dues, and other charges from members and others; (5) to do or cause to be done any other act or covenant for conducting or promot-



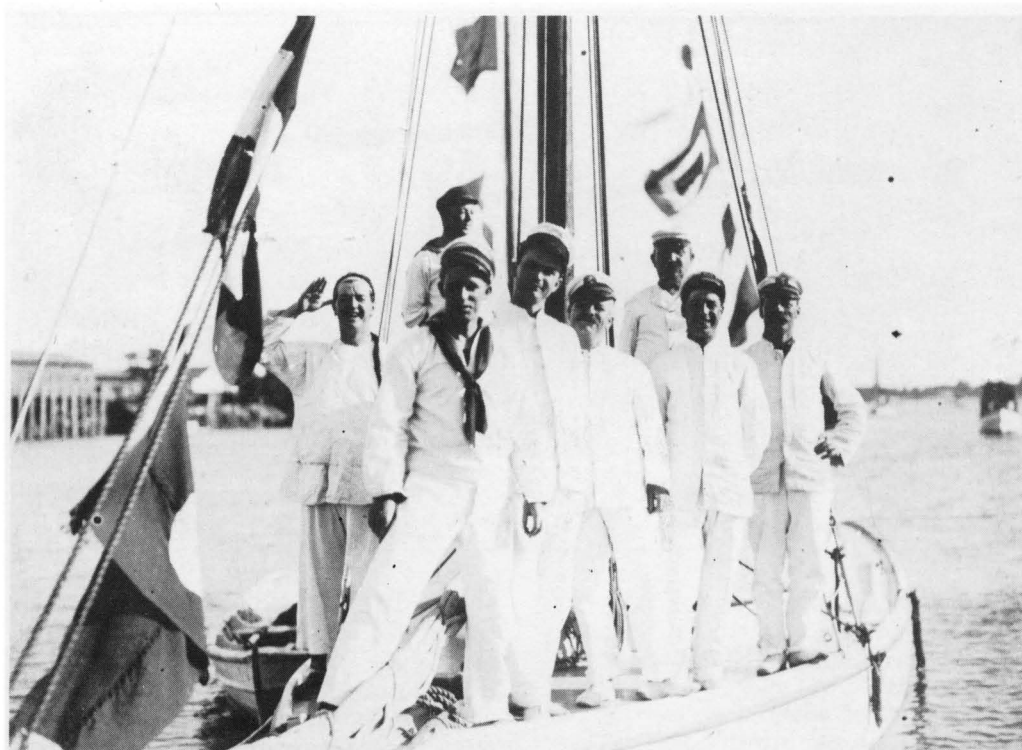
"Helen" was built by Chapman in 1901 at Turner Shipyard. Purchased by J.P. Scully in 1906, she served as the VYC flagship in 1907-08.

ing any of the objects or purposes mentioned above." "The term of existence shall be fifty years. Looking back over the past eighty-seven years that the club has been in existence these purposes have certainly been met. The club was incorporated as a capital stock corporation with \$5,000 @ \$1.00 per share. The amount of stock actually subscribed to and listed as an attachment to the incorporation documents was \$736.06 with the names of the fifty-four subscribers listed along with the amount of each subscription which varied from \$5 to \$50. Stock was sold to the members for building the clubhouse and harbor improvements. On November 15, 1936, new Articles of Incorporation were filed making the club a non-profit organization. The name was changed to Vallejo Yacht Club at that time.

Financial support for the Vallejo Yacht Club for many years was meager in terms of cash income. A summary prepared by longtime Treasurer S. J. McKnight titled "Statement of Receipts and Disbursements" showed total receipts of \$644.50 and disbursements of \$591.46 in 1902. The total receipts averaged approximately \$1400 per year until 1916-1918 (World War I) when they dropped to a low of \$735.10 in 1917. After the war they gradually increased to about \$2400 until the early depression years again reduced the income to under \$2000 per year until 1935. Again they rose to \$3860.21 in 1939. The total income for this thirty-seven year period was \$64,374.99 with total disbursements of \$64,283.73. Compare those figures with the current 1987 budget with revenues of \$221,310, expenditures of \$181,115 and reserves of \$40,195.

The dues were \$1.00 per month for many years with initiation fees of \$5.00 which were raised to \$10.00 in 1927. A ten per cent federal excise tax on dues and initiation fees was assessed in 1923 although the club was unaware of this until 1927 when they had to pay \$396.08 in back taxes. In May 1956 the law changed to exempt such clubs from the 25 per cent excise tax if dues and fees did not exceed \$10. Fees for capital improvements were exempt. In order to avoid the excise tax the dues structure was changed so that the \$27.00 yearly dues were divided into \$10 for dues and \$17 for capital improvement. The excise tax was no longer a factor in 1963 when non-profit organizations became exempt.

Volunteer labor by club members in every endeavor from construction of the buildings and harbor fund raisers to food service and social events had been the major factor in keeping the operating costs down while at the same time providing the opportunity for



"Helen" cruised to Sacramento in August 1906 with (left to right) Frank Lee, Walter Pierce, John Beard, Judge J.A. Browne, Charles Frebel, M. McNamara, and Jack Scully.

members to be a real part of the club. Until food service was contracted for in 1976 and a club manager employed, the only regular labor costs were for a club steward and for bartending. Funds for capital improvements were raised as needed by selling stock or notes and by a bank loan when the new clubhouse was built.

Club management and operation of the Vallejo Yacht Club were conducted solely by the club officers and board of directors. The commodore was the administrative head and chairman of the board in charge of all of the club activities. Fortunately the affairs of the club were most often in good hands largely thanks to the services of the numerous officers who served faithfully over long periods of time thus bringing continuity to the operation. In 1967 a third flag officer was added, that of rear commodore. Herbert Philips was the first rear commodore. By 1971 growth and complexity of the club's operation made further division of responsibilities essential. The by-laws were changed making the commodore responsible for the social and boating activities of the club including the clubhouse maintenance. The chairman of the board of directors was elected from among the board members and the chairman became the administrative head. In 1978, the immediate past commodore became staff commodore and was a voting member of the board. Tom Hosley was the first staff commodore.

During the 1960s and up to 1976, much of the fund raising and operations for social affairs fell to the house committee chairman who had to make

arrangements for the food, dance bands, ticket sales, cooks, and volunteer help. Bill Hanley, commodore in 1970, carried the responsibilities as house committee chairman often along with dual duties as port captain and treasurer. On December 16, 1976, Shirley Burns became the first paid manager of the club, thus providing much needed daily operation responsibilities and services required by a business with a budget of \$116,000 per year. Shirley remained as manager for ten years, except for two breaks, and was replaced by Barbara Chandler in 1987.

Food service for the banquets, parties and other social events was traditionally provided by volunteer cooks and member helpers. Some were quite elaborate affairs. An early example was the menu printed on the commodore's "Order of the Day" celebrating the opening day of the yachting season on April 20, 1913. The following items were listed:

RATIONS CARD

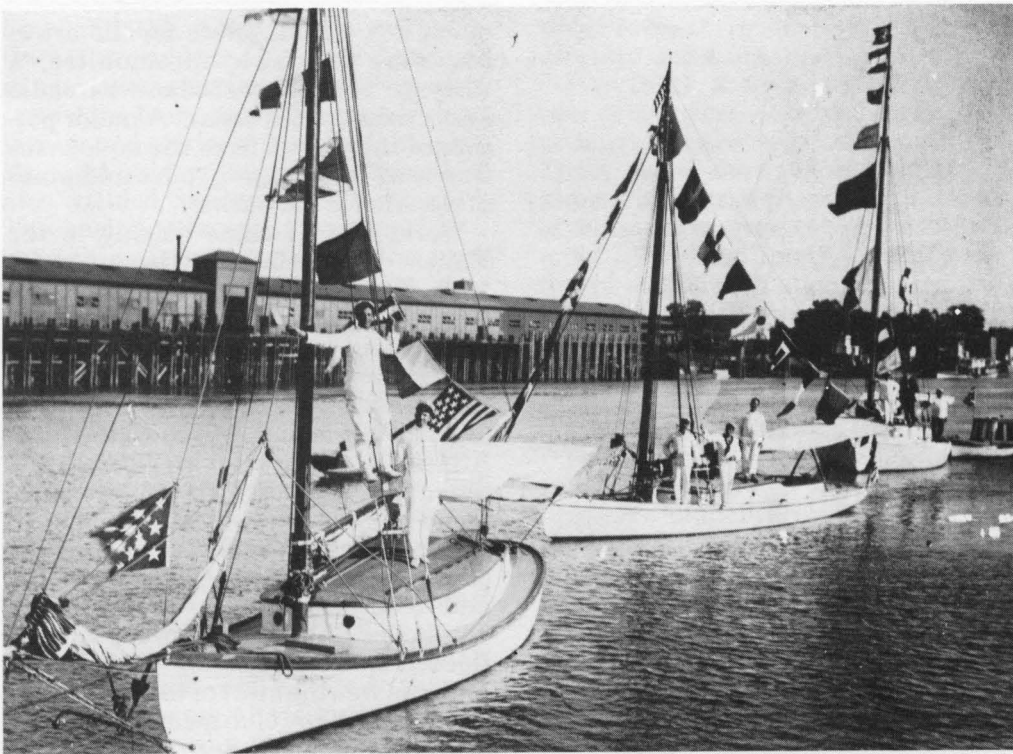
"SUDS" Oakum Salad, Turk's Head Knot with Marine Dressing, Poulet des Goats Island Herbes.

"PAINT" Roast Tule Shoat a la San Joaquin, Pomes, Lanyard, Gastro-omme, Froides Float Tar.

"BUBBLE" Glaces la Mare Island, Croustades de Hard Tack, Cafe Black Leg, "Waterfront Dreams."

Noted cooks during the years include Toney Smith, Frank Algeo, Carmen Batchelor, Bill Hanley, Ike and Alice Eichner, and Bill Jensen.

After the formation of the Ladies Auxiliary in 1957, this group of hard



"Catherine," "Helen," and "Phylis" display flags on cruise to Sacramento in 1906.

working ladies put on many special event meals. Annual events with meals included were New Year's Eve, Crab Feed, Jigg's Dinner, Commodore's Ball, Halloween, incoming cruises, and the big races such as the YRA Vallejo Race, and the NCPCA power boat races.

Of course, no self-respecting yacht club could do without a bar. Vallejo Yacht Club has always done its best to quench the thirsts of its members and visitors. A beautiful bar graced the club room of the old clubhouse. It was moved to the new clubhouse in 1967 where it served until 1987. Again most bartending was done by volunteers although extra help was occasionally employed. Joe Schlosser, the current club bartender, has been a member of the club for fifty-two years. He served on a part-time basis for many years and after his retirement as bartender from the Mare Island Officers' Club in March 1977, he became the official club bartender. He is handy for any emergency service as he lives aboard his boat "Humu II".

After a number of unsuccessful attempts to have food service on a regular basis, Fernand and George Loing began serving meals on Friday, Saturday and Sunday early in 1977. Their French cuisine was a hit. They terminated their contract in October 1977, but their cook, Rugby, and their staff stayed on to continue the service under the supervision of club manager Shirley Burns. Food service was again suspended in June 1978 because low volume made it financially unsound to continue. George and Rose Booker took over the food service in 1980 and con-

tinued until June 1, 1987.

A club steward was employed from 1902 until the mid 1970s. The first steward, Daniel Shea, served from 1902-06 and was granted a life membership in appreciation for his services. John Polkinghorn served as steward as well as being a board member and the builder of the "California." Mac Espanol was also made a life member when he retired on May 6, 1972. Since that time the duties of steward have been split and assumed by the club manager, committees, a custodian, gardener, and to a large extent by club member Art Campbell. Since his retirement from Mare Island in 1982, he lives aboard his boat and is available to open and close the club, greet visitors, make repairs, and perform a myriad of other chores around the club as a volunteer.

Many records of the period from 1902 to 1922 have disappeared. Newspaper clippings and some ledgers and minutes indicated that the membership remained at about one hundred and the social and boating activities increased as time went on. Minutes for the period from 1915-1921 have been preserved as well as the "guest book" of visiting yachts from 1914 to July 1932. Some highlights from the minutes were:

1915 - Revenue from the coin box on the player piano netted from \$33 to \$128 per month.

The club voted to enter into a contract to buy the piano and new rolls of music for \$314.

No berthing fee as there were no slips at the club.

A work party was held on December 12, 1915, to raise the gang plank for

the new entrance on Virginia Street with feed for the workers which cost \$11.60.

In March 1916 the club entered into a joint money making project with the Republic Theater to sell tickets to the shows with 50 per cent of the ticket sales to go to the club. No record of the success or failure of the venture was recorded.

Monthly dances were held at a cost of \$16.20 but receipts rarely equalled expenses.

Because of the poor financial condition of the club the practice of allowing credit or rebating of dues for work performed by members was discontinued on September 15, 1915.

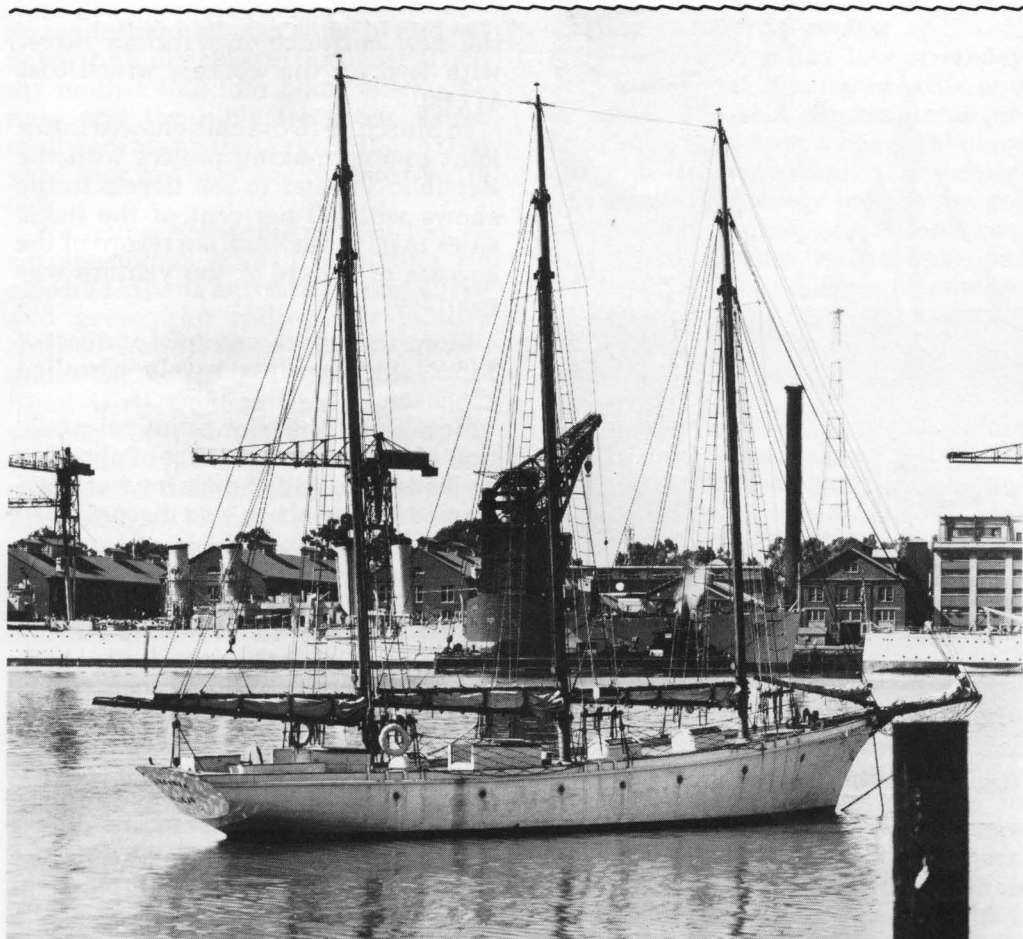
Problems with abuses of docking boats at the club float was a recurring item of discussion in 1916 and still is an issue seventy years later.

Another problem noted in the minutes of January 25, 1917, was the charge that owners of the "Arks" (houseboats) were apparently removing sections of the footwalk leading to the clubhouse making it necessary for members to walk on the bulkheads — a dangerous practice at night. No mention was made of the condition of the members who attempted to negotiate the walkway. However, funds were approved for a new walkway atop the bulkheads.

World War I received little official attention in the minutes. On April 26, 1917, the Vallejo Yachting and Rowing Club passed a resolution "transferring to honorary membership all members who have or shall enlist in the military or naval arms of our country with the remission of all dues until the termination of said term of enlistment." Commodore Herman Streichan was called to army service and the club gave a testimonial dinner on October 3, 1917. He was presented with a watch and guard. Streichan reported to Camp Lewis and served in France until the summer of 1919. He returned and again served as commodore in 1920.

Social events in 1917 included an opening day affair in the evening on May 5 and a boat run to Napa with dinner at a leading hotel on Sunday May 6. A cruise to Kelshaw Island with a clam feed was held on July 22, 1917. Kelshaw Island on the Napa River was a popular sport for Vallejo Yachting and Rowing Club cruises. A.E. Kelshaw had joined the club in May 1909 and served as port captain in 1916 and 1917. In 1915 he had donated a gasoline engine to provide the first power to haul boats upon the clubhouse ways.

The election of officers held on January 30, 1919, was the first recorded contested election with a "Regular Ticket" ballot and an "Independent Ticket" ballot printed. The Independent candi-



The 57-foot schooner "California" built by John Polkinghorn in 1934-35 was the largest boat built by a VYC club member.

date for commodore, T.J. Bassford, was elected while all other candidates on the Regular ballot were elected. The only times a commodore failed to serve his full term of office were: Herman Streichan, called to service in 1917; Joseph Ennis in 1927 when he was transferred from Mare Island to a new USN officers billet; and Paul C. Anderson, who along with Financial Secretary K. Zieser resigned their offices on March 8, 1925, as the result of a dispute over financial matters. Bert Ryan, who had served as commodore in 1918, was elected to replace Anderson.

While no minutes survive the period 1928-38, apparently the club activities continued to expand, particularly from 1935 on. The monthly free dances attracted full house crowds of 200. Vallejo Yacht Club was a focal point in Vallejo's social activities of the era.

A major event was the Bass Derby sponsored by the Vallejo Yacht Club on September 25-26, 1937. One thousand dollars in cash prizes were given for the largest fish caught and to holders of prize winning tickets in a drawing. Events included aquaplane stunts, amateur swims across the channel, inboard and outboard motorboat races, boxing matches, a softball game between Vallejo and Napa, motorcycle races, a dance and entertainment from the "365" Club in San Francisco. Tickets for the drawing for cash prizes were

sold for twenty-five cents and proceeds from the event went to help pay the VYC clubhouse building debt.

From 1938 through 1941 the yacht club sponsored what was by far the most extensive undertaking in the club's history. The aquacade was an annual event held in September which grew each year and only with the onset of World War II in December 1941 did it all suddenly end. Fortunately, all of the records of the aquacade committees of 1939 through 1941 have survived so we are able to "see" first-hand what occurred. By 1941, the most extensive aquacade program had evolved. The club hired the West Coast Amusement Company to put on a carnival and to run the queen contest. Another firm contracted to decorate thirty yacht club boats for the "Aquacade Electric Boat Parade" at a cost of \$1,000. The Inboard Boat Racing Association agreed to hold four 5-mile races with boats of 91 cu. inch, 135 cu. inch and 155 cu. inch engine displacement plus inboard runabouts each competing in one race by engine size class. The fee paid by VYC to the Association was \$100 plus \$90 for cups for the winners. Fifty-cent tickets were good for prize drawings and votes for the queen and for admission to the Yacht Club.

Profits reported were \$465.03 in 1939, \$2,012 in 1940, and \$5,300 in 1941, of which \$1200 was from the club slot

machines. Grand prizes for the drawing were two new automobiles, a Chrysler Fluid Drive sedan with radio and a deluxe Ford sedan. A major portion of the profits from the aquacades was used for dredging, piles and other materials for the harbor.

World War II came quickly to the Vallejo Yacht Club on December 10, 1941. The Headquarters Battery and Ammunition Train, 2nd Battalion, 211th Artillery (anti-air craft) was dispatched to Vallejo to install and maintain anti-aircraft barrage balloons around Mare Island. According to Arthur Krause, a young club member at the time, who was at the clubhouse on a rainy night a few days after the troops arrived, the rain-soaked lieutenant in charge of the unit knocked on the door and requested the use of the club's boathouse to get his men out of their flooded tents. Permission was granted and this was the start of the joint use of the clubhouse by club members and the army which lasted until May 5, 1943. All of the contracts and correspondence about this arrangement have survived and provide a fascinating glimpse into one small bit of the war. Toney Smith was the commodore who signed the contracts. He ran a local meat market and was a longtime member who held several offices. For many years he wrote a monthly article in the club "Binnacle" about the activities of the members. Smith served as volunteer chef for many functions. The boathouse was improved by the army, and the kitchen was jointly used by all parties. The club eventually received \$2,063.43 as rent. These funds were used to help dredge and build the new harbor starting in 1952.

The Yacht Club applied to the War Production Board for permission to rebuild the marine way in December 1943. In explaining to the Board the relationship of the project to essential military needs, the application states: "The marine railway will be used for servicing of patrol craft authorized as an auxiliary U.S. Coast guard Auxiliary Flotilla #257 patrolling restricted waters in and about the U.S. Navy Yard, Mare Island Channel, and also for use by regular yacht club members." A list of materials including steel bolts, nuts, plates and timbers was included with the application. The project was approved after detailed plans and a letter from the Coast Guard supporting the project were submitted.

Some VYC yachts participated in these patrols. The only VYC yacht actually turned over to the government during the war was Dr. E. J. Casper's "Junemma" which was refurbished and returned at the end of the war.

(Continued in the next issue)

USS CONSTITUTION VISITS VALLEJO - MARE ISLAND

by Sue Lemmon

With the recent celebration of our constitution's birthday, we look back with nostalgia to the days when the USS CONSTITUTION, "Old Ironsides," visited this area.

In 1933 the citizens of northern California were delighted to have an opportunity to pay their respects to the venerable old ship.

San Francisco marked the westernmost tip of a two-year voyage that had included the chief Atlantic ports, Panama, and San Pedro. By April 1933 the CONSTITUTION had visited some forty odd towns, and huge masses of people were in attendance at each stop.

Vallejo and Mare Island were determined to be ready for this special event.

Rear Admiral Reeves, USN, Commandant of Mare Island Naval Shipyard, sent letters to newspapers in northern California to advise that the ship was scheduled to visit Vallejo and Mare Island from April 26th to May 2nd. Meetings were held, plans discussed, and the entire community became obsessed with plans for the impending visit.

In the weeks preceding the CONSTITUTION's visit newspapers printed details of the various events being planned. Community pride rose high

with the knowledge that one of the three weeks that the ship would be in the San Francisco area would be spent at Vallejo.

The press and radio reported each meeting and what committees were named for what purpose. It was announced that the Shipyard would be open for visitors without any formalities, either by car over the causeway or by ferry. While there was to be no charge to enter by car, the civil ferry from the foot of Georgia Street planned to charge five cents per person.

Mayor Fred H. Heegler announced that fifty-one strings of flags had been purchased by the city to be strung across downtown streets two days before the arrival of the CONSTITUTION. The flags, yellow bordered, bore the image of a ship and the inscription, "Welcome to Vallejo," and supplemented other street decorations donated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.



Crowds patiently await their turn to inspect the USS CONSTITUTION at Mare Island.

US Navy Photograph

The Vallejo Fire Chief went down to San Francisco to see how the City planned to handle fire protection problems; service clubs scheduled events of various types; the mayor extended invitations to civic leaders from Modesto to Oregon; and the superintendent of schools encouraged all schools in northern California to schedule visits for their students.

Boy Scouts were enlisted to act as guides aboard ship and to serve as junior traffic officers in directing Mare Island-bound visitors during the ship's stay.

On March 25 the following official program was published:

"April 26, Wednesday: Reception of officers and crew of USS CONSTITUTION and the USS GREBE, its towing ship.

"April 27: Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce luncheon at Casa de Vallejo to which officers of two ships will be guests. Wrestling show in evening.

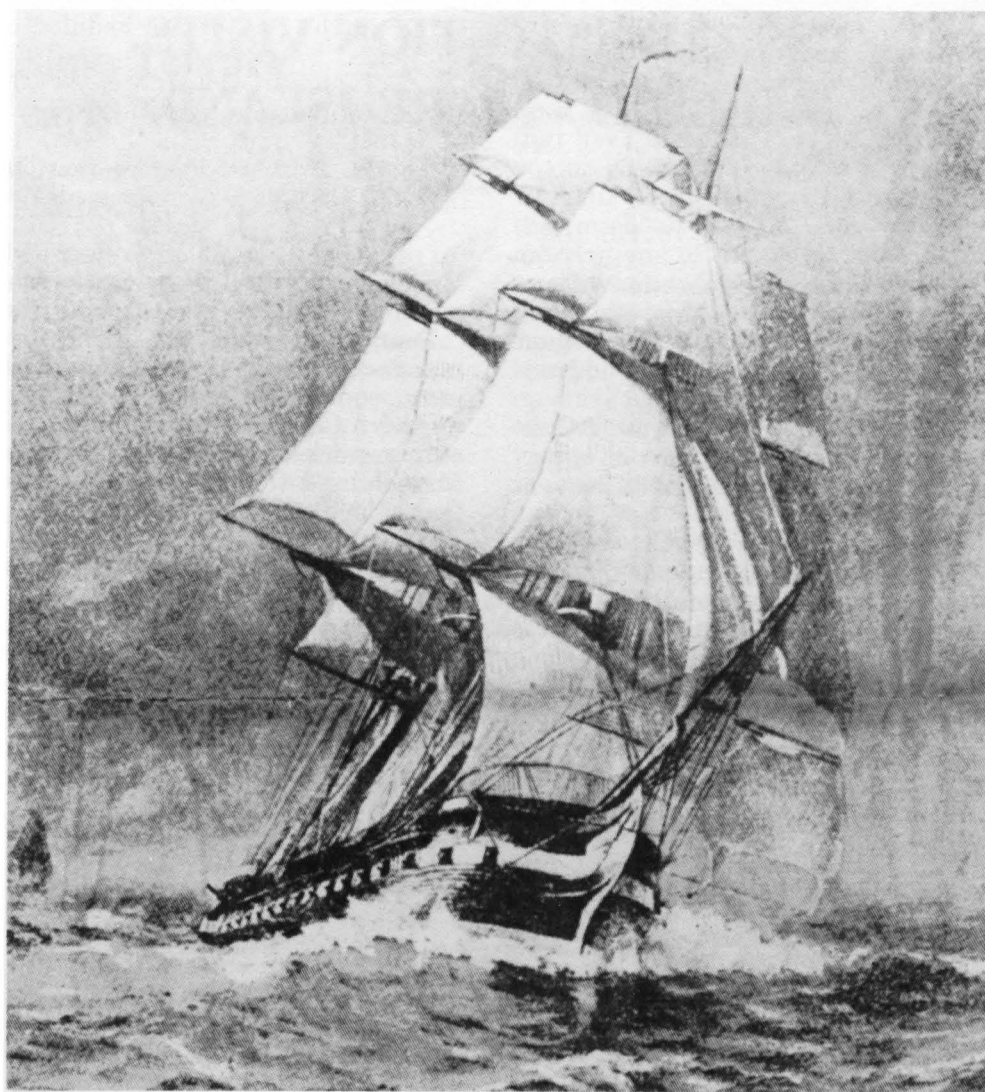
"April 28: Kiwanis luncheon at Casa de Vallejo for club members in 14 northern California cities. Officers of two ships will be guests. CONSTITUTION Ball of the Veterans- Alliance in the Memorial building, at which officers and crews will be guests.

"April 29: Dance to be given jointly by Senior and Junior Chambers for men of the two ships. Elks' Club CONSTITUTION night." Midnight performance at Valmar theater with enlisted men of two ships as guests.

"April 30: Men of the CONSTITUTION and GREBE to be guests of Fox Virginia and Fox Senator at evening performances. Special services in local churches.

"May 1: Entertainment for crew of ships at Naval YMCA." Other activities planned for the week included the Redmen's Days of Gold celebration to which the men of the CONSTITUTION were especially invited.

Mr. T. M. Harcourt was hired as "publicity man" to conduct an intensive campaign to inform northern California of the impending visit. Among other innovative ventures, he and Ray Varney (who piloted him) went on a speaking tour of seven Sacramento Valley cities in Lloyd M. Dudley's Travelair plane. Varney and Harcourt hopped from Knight Field on a Monday afternoon on the Kiwanis Club's mission. Harcourt spoke before Kiwanis Clubs of Redding, Red Bluff, Williams, Orland, and Willows, before student body assemblies in eleven schools in the five cities and one in Maxwell, and before the American Legion posts at Red Bluff and Orland. At each flying field the Vallejo men were met by Kiwanis delegations and transported to schools and halls. The air junket hit the fancy of newspapers in the cities visited, and stories were featured on



their front pages.

Financing the venture was the responsibility of a committee which obtained an initial \$250 from local organizations and individuals to defray costs of printing, poster, publicity and other incidentals; a larger amount was contributed later. Additional advertising was given the ship's visit through posters distributed by the Associated Oil Co., while concessionaires applied to the Chamber of Commerce for the right sell medallions, lithographs, books, and other objects connected with the old frigate.

Special excursions were planned from the Napa Valley to be run by the San Francisco-Napa and Calistoga Railway, with other excursions scheduled by the Southern Pacific from Sacramento Valley points as well as by bus from Sonoma County.

The Associated Oil Company provided 15,000 souvenir programs which were distributed free, while newspapers recorded the history of the CONSTITUTION innumerable times. The Vallejo TIMES' editorial of April 5, 1933, began: "It is nearly twenty years since the waters of Mare Island Strait have floated a vessel of the old frigate class." Not only the history, but construction

details of "Old Ironsides" were offered, including the fact that the total rigging weighed 68 tons, there were 1200 blocks or pulleys, and the bolts that fastened her timbers were made at the foundry of Paul Revere.

One of the most interesting articles was from the Vallejo NEWS of April 25, which noted that "the rigging on a sailing vessel presents a helter-skelter of rope, sail, masts, and yard arms to the landlubber, and this information is published for the benefit of our readers..." The article continued with information on masts, spars, booms, and gaffs. According to the TIMES of April 27, crowds lined the waterfront streets as the ship arrived the previous afternoon. "...Watched the tall masted, black hulled sailing ship as it crept, at six knots, around the southern end of Mare Island and proceeded up the channel at the end of tow lines from two tugs. The USS GREBE, tender ship, whose mission it is to tow Old Ironsides at sea, had a day off...leaving the towing job to a small fleet of tugs from San Francisco."

Headed by Thomas J. O'Hara, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and LT. J. G. Atkins, USN, Commandant's Aide, a delegation of Vallejo leaders

boarded the ship at 3:50 p.m. on the 26th after all lines had been secured to the Mare Island quaywall. They were received by CDR Louis J. Gulliver, USN, Commanding Officer, and taken to his quarters on the gun deck where they signed the guest register. The frigate's skipper was then brought to the Vallejo City Hall where an official reception was tendered by RADM Reeves, Mayor Heegler, and other northern California municipal officials.

Of all the 52 stops the frigate has made," CDR Gulliver said in a brief acknowledgement, "Vallejo is the first city at which an official welcome with mayors of nearby cities present has been tendered to us."

And the visitors thronged to Mare Island. Representing dozens of northern California cities and towns, visitors toured "Old Ironsides." Bus loads of school children from nearby communities arrived early, anxiously awaiting 10 o'clock when the ship was opened. Adult attendance nearly equalled that of the younger guests, and teachers and parents accompanying school children displayed enthusiasm equal to that of their charges. Stationed at all ladders and entrances on the ship were Boy Scouts, to assist the visitors in ascending or descending the unfamiliar stairways.

Claiming the distinction of working on the newest and oldest of ships afloat, Mare Island workmen were employed on the recently launched cruiser USS SAN FRANCISCO, and on the CONSTITUTION, where minor repairs to gangways, pumps, gun ports, and canvas work were underway.

Every day the good-natured crowds lined up to visit the ship, while highly successful social events took place in Vallejo. One highlight was a luncheon sponsored by local Kiwanians at the Casa de Vallejo, at which clubs from Benicia, Healdsburg, Martinez, Modesto, Napa, Orland, Red Bluff, Rio Vista, Sacramento, Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Stockton, Willows, Oakland, Yuba City, Williams, and Vallejo were present. Special guest John DeForrest, of Benicia, a member of the crew to the CONSTITUTION in 1881, was accorded a roar of applause when he was introduced.

Most of the time the weather was pleasant, and while there were occasional showers and threatening skies one day, they barely slowed the eager mass of people.

One no-show was Governor James Rolph, Jr., who sent regrets because he was extremely busy in Sacramento because of the Legislature being in session. In addition, he was occupied signing diplomas for upcoming graduation exercises at the University of California, and he always remained in his

office on the day of a scheduled execution.

But despite the Governor's absence, 49,001 individuals visited the CONSTITUTION during the five-day sojourn. One impressed person was Thomas J. O'Hara, who was astonished by the invasion of Vallejo. He parked for two hours near the intersection of Marin and Tennessee streets on Sunday afternoon to check cars and their passengers.

From tire covers (remember them?) O'Hara checked cars from Calistoga, Roseville, Grass Valley, Reno (Nevada), Utah, Ohio, Woodland, Davis, Vacaville, Fairfield, Hollister, San Francisco, Martinez, Visalia, Suisun, Berkeley, Napa, St. Helena, Sebastopol, Pittsburg, Los Gatos, Alberta (Texas), Arbuckle, Vancouver (B.C.), and other places.

His analysis showed that the cars carried between four and five persons each. A total of 4,296 cars crossed the causeway between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Hundreds parked on the Vallejo side and walked across the causeway. Despite advanced planning, downtown restaurants ran out of food to serve visitors, and the city park was swamped with persons eating picnic lunches.

Over the years Vallejo has experienced launchings, Armed Forces and Navy Day fetes, conventions, Marine World openings, and other celebrations that brought visitors from afar to enter her portals. Up to 1933, however, nothing in the City's history drew a heavier influx than did the visit of the CONSTITUTION.

OLD IRONSIDES

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;—
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the
flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;—
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

Oh! better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

—Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1830.

The Trials of Captain Waterman

by Matthew Fountain

In early 1852 the several trials of Captain Robert H. Waterman in San Francisco drew intense local attention because of the inflammatory nature of the charges of cruelty against him by members of his crew.

Waterman, known as "Bully" Waterman to many, was an almost legendary captain who drove his ships hard and had set many speed records on his trips to the Orient. After the notoriety of his trials forced his retirement, he settled down to managing a large tract of land acquired in Solano County. He founded the city of Fairfield and was successful in having it become the county seat.

According to Hubert H. Bancroft in Volume 36 of his works published in 1887, "In the summer of 1851, the clipper ship *Challenge*, Waterman master, sailed from New York, and arrived at San Francisco, the last of October. The crew was composed mostly of foreigners, and those of the worst class....During the voyage the crew mutinied and caused much trouble. Douglass, the chief mate, was stabbed with a dagger, and the captain narrowly escaped seizure. Amid much tribulation and danger the ship was brought into port.

"But during the voyage Captain Waterman had been severe and even cruel; whether unnecessarily or so does not appear. Three of the seamen had been knocked overboard from the cross-jack yard in a gale, five died from dysentery on the way and one from epilepsy the day of arrival. Many were maimed by the blows which they had received during the voyage and on landing were sent to the hospital."

"Immediately on dropping anchor the captain went on shore. Shortly after it was noised abroad that Waterman and Douglass had shamefully treated the crew during the voyage, unmercifully beating and even killing some of them." When the vessel came into the wharf a large number of boatmen and longshoremen gathered and threatened to hang the captain and mate. The next day the disabled seamen were transferred to the hospital and the sight incited a mob of two thousand men to gather in front of the office of Alsop and Company, consignees of the ship, and to demand Waterman and Douglass. When Mayor Charles Brenham found himself unable to quell the excitement he called for citizens to assist in the preservation of the public peace. The Committee of Vigilance rang its bell, the vigilants assembled, marched into the mob, and dispersed it.

Bancroft commented, "The officers of the Challenge might or might not be guilty of atrocities; but in either event this was not the way to determine the matter . . . In this instance, whatever the master and mate might be, they were not chronic criminals or lawless desperadoes, and therefore were not fit subjects for the secret tribunal. They were responsible men, following a legitimate calling. It was a matter for the courts only."

Bancroft ended his comments with "The United States Marshal boarded the ship and informed the sailors that they were at liberty to enter complaint against their officers, and they did so. Of murder and maltreatment they accused them. Doubtless these men deserved the punishment they received; but it is the attitude and action alone of the Vigilance Committee that we are called upon to note in this connection." Having made this point that the Vigilants were an effective force for law and order, even though they did not at all times observe the letter of the law, Bancroft ceased his account without discussing any further developments. However, it is known that Waterman came to San Francisco, surrendered to the authorities, and spent some time in jail while awaiting trial. The *Alta California* of December 24, 1851, reported that Captain Waterman had been released upon \$20,000 bail. A defense witness at Waterman's first trial testified having visited him several times in jail.

David Andrew Weir in his interesting book *The Fabulous Captain Waterman* tells of the newspaper coverage given to Waterman's trials and gives a brief summary of the cases and their disposition. Weir states, "On January 10, 1852, before the first case was presented, Captain Waterman, appearing without counsel, read the following sworn statement to the court:

The truth is that, when my ship *Challenge* was in the neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, about 30 of the crew fell on the first mate, Jim Douglass, with the declared intention of killing him, and, afterward, me. This act they later confessed to, which signed confessions I have in my possession at this time.

On the occasion in question, I was on the bridge taking observations while the mate Douglass stood forward at the galley. Mutinous leaders of the incident stabbed Mr. Douglass and had beaten him shockingly before I could get to him. I struck down three of the mutineers with my sextant, rescued the mate and quelled the mutiny. I flogged eight of the confessed mutineers. Off Cape Horn, three men fell from the mizzen tops'l yardarm and were killed, and after a few weeks four more men died of dysentery and syphilis; none of

them, however, were among the mutineers..."

I had already agreed with the authorities and the Vigilantes Committee to stand trial in open court at any appointed time. Now it can and will be shown that the toughs of the crew of the *Challenge* received only such treatment—severe as it seemed to be—as was necessary for the successful operation of the ship and the safety of the forty-two passengers aboard."

Weir barely mentions the first few trials, merely stating the defendants were Robert Henry Waterman and James Douglass; the charges were cruelty to Seamen George Lessing, Berkenshaw (Birkenshaw), George Hill, J. Macartney, James Pearson, and Dick Cleaver. Weir added that Cleaver was stricken from the list of plaintiffs when it was shown he had died of disease several days prior to the mutiny, and that Judge Hoffman dismissed the case when the jury disagreed for lack of evidence.

Evidently Weir, who placed the starting date for the hearings as January 10, wrote without having access to the *Alta California* of January 1 and January 8, which carried partial testimony from the first two cases tried. This testimony may explain why so few of the forty-two passengers mentioned in Waterman's statement came to his defense. According to William Maston "[I] Was a passenger on board the ship *Challenge*; there were three other passengers."

The first charge against Waterman was that of assault and battery upon one Frederick Birkenshaw, a seaman on board the ship *Challenge*. Considerable difficulty was had in obtaining a jury, a large number being excused for natural bias.

Selected portions of the testimony from the *Alta California* follow to give a flavor of the proceedings. The reader will note the editing by the reporter to save space.

"Birkenshaw testified — Was a seaman on board the ship *Challenge*; the way I came to get my arm broken was this: the mate came down to the fore-castle where I was concealed, and ordered me on deck: I went on deck and went aft; the mate said to the captain, "I've got the son of a b——h;" the captain ordered the mate to put me in irons; and the captain said, "down on your knees you son of a b——h," I got on my knees and saw a stick raised in the captain's hands, coming down on my head; I put up my arm to save my head, and the weight of the stick came down on my arm; he struck me several times upon the body and on my eye with the stick; I felt the bones of my arm crack at the time of the blow; it broke my arm; it was this side of Cape



Captain Waterman



Horn; the stick was about three and a half feet long and about two inches in diameter. . . . no care was given to my arm on board the vessel; it was about six weeks after it was broken before we reached San Francisco; after the captain struck me he kept me on my knees for about six hours."

Judge O. Hoffman ruled that as the testimony, so far as it had gone, had proven the captain guilty of an illegal act, the defense had the right to prove any justification.

After Captain Offringer of the US Revenue cutter testified that Birkenshaw had told him his arm was broken by a blow from the first mate with an axe helve, James Douglass, first mate, described the mutiny. "I remember the overhauling of the men's chests; I was ordered to search them; had nearly finished when I was seized from behind, and the rest jumped me immediately; so that I could not see who seized me first; I felt a knife go into me just as I reached the deck; all let go except one George Smith; I could see the third mate and boatswain standing near; I called to them to give me something to clear myself; heard the third mate say "I can't assist you," or something to that effect; Capt. Waterman came to my assistance, and took hold of Smith, telling the rest of the crew to come aft; Birkenshaw was then missing; I told the second mate to look for him; a few minutes after I went myself to look for him; could not find him; did not see him from the 17th of August to

the 16th of September; I found him concealed in the lower forecabin; two of the crew told me where he was; after the first revolt, the crew showed in every way a mutinous temper, continually skulking, from one to seven (men) every day; they would get into the hold among the cargo, remaining there two or three days at a time, they would go on duty very unwillingly;...the Capt. asked Smith what was his motive in making the disturbance; he made at first some slight denial, and then told the whole, never heard the Capt. tell him if he did not confess he would never get to California; don't know how long he was in the cabin; the crew were standing near the quarter deck; I told them to stop there; very generally obeyed my orders when I had my eye on them; they were quiet when Smith left the cabin; he was tied up in the rigging and flogged; none of the crew made any resistance to his punishment; he was flogged in sight of the whole crew; don't know how many lashes I gave him...At the time of the first disturbance there continued around me Downey, Nicoli, the third mate, Lewis, and a man named Scott; called to Downey for a stick; he walked away after the Capt. came up; they had me down and were kicking me: four or five were punished...I heard five or six men confess in the cabin; they gave no reason for their intention of taking the ship; they said they were going to run her into Rio; some complained of being destitute of clothes; one said it was on account of ill treatment; there was constant quarrelling among the crew, which disabled them from duty..."

W.W. Burdick swore — "Was a passenger on board the ship *Challenge*; saw an attack made upon the mate, Mr. Douglass, by Smith and Birkenshaw, first saw the mate on his knees with Smith and Birkenshaw engaged with him; the captain had been taking the sun, and seeing the mate in difficulty, seized a belaying pin, sprang in amongst them and the men ran forward; the men were then ordered aft; Smith was taken aft and put in irons; the captain told him he had committed a great offense and that he ought to be punished; that if he would make a confession it would lessen the offense; he first denied any knowledge of a mutiny; but finally confessed that the crew had resolved to mutiny and take the ship...the wound the mate had in the thigh was a severe one, about an inch long; he suffered some considerable time from the wound; he was not off duty, however, on account of it."

George Hill swore — "Was a seaman on board the ship *Challenge*;...was present on the 17th of August, when the disturbance was; I was called up on deck by the mate, sat down aft, forward

of the mainmast; saw the mate go forward and order the chests to be brought on deck; he told the men to overhaul the chests; some of the men had made complaint that they had lost something; saw the mate strike several of the men with a belaying pin because they did not come up quick enough; Birkenshaw was one that he struck with a belaying pin; some of the crew were sick at that time, don't know was the matter with them; saw no one use a knife of the mate; saw no knives used in the crowd."

Three seamen and one passenger testified seeing Waterman strike Birkenshaw. The passenger described the stick as being two feet long and about as large round as a broomstick.

After four days of testimony the judge charged the jury they were not to pass upon the general conduct of Captain Waterman, but to confine themselves to the particular case in question, and that they were to be the judges from the evidence of the existence or nonexistence of an exigency sufficient to justify the act charged — if they were satisfied it was committed. The jury, after being out nearly 24 hours, came into court stating they could not decide and were discharged.

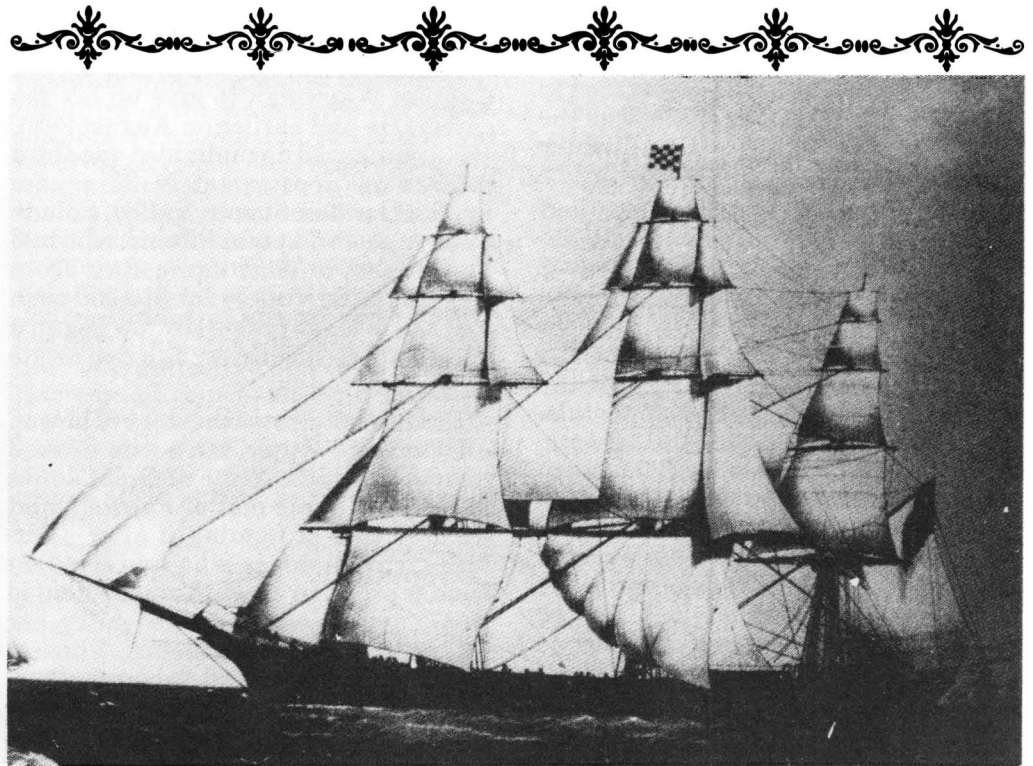
Captain Waterman and Douglass were then arraigned and plead "not guilty" to eleven indictments found against them for assaults upon other seamen on the *Challenge*.

The indictment in the second trial charged that Robert Waterman and James Douglass had maltreated

George Lessig, a seaman on board the ship *Challenge*. As the *Alta California* reported the testimony of but two witnesses, the following excerpt is presented only to show the nature of the charge.

"George Hill, sworn — Was a seaman on board the ship *Challenge*; knew a seaman on board, named Geo. Lessig; off Cape Horn saw Douglass strike him with a rope. Lessig replied he was sick; the mate said, "Go aft, the captain will cure you; the captain said, "I think we will baptize you;" the mate shoved him in the lee scuppers; the water was about up to the knees; the ship was careened; the weather was rough and cold; Lessig was sick; he is now dead; he died ten or twelve days after he was put in the scuppers; he complained of having the dysentery ten days before the incidence; think that Lessig was about twenty years of age; after he was put in the scuppers he was tied to the weather rail, on the starboard side; his clothes consisted of cloth trowsers and a blue flannel shirt; he had no shoes or hat on.

"Cross Examined....The immersion did not last over three or four minutes; he laid him in the scuppers and jumped upon him; the mate jammed him down into the water; Lessig used to be called 'the dancing master' on board ship; he got that name from his habit of dancing about when the captain and mate flogged him; don't know how he was rated on board; he used to muster with the boys; I should not call him a seaman."



Challenge was Captain Waterman's Waterloo.

The testimony of a second seaman added a few details. "The mate had hold of a rope by his hand and with his feet was jumping on the boy....His (Les-sig's) clothes were not changed before he was tied up."

The jury in this case also was not able to decide.

Details from the following trials are taken from David Weir's *The Fabulous Waterman*. On January 18th James Douglass was acquitted of murdering Seaman Pappaw, Judge Hoffman ruled: "The United States Court has no jurisdiction in such cases under existing statute." The scant evidence indicated the aged seaman Pappaw was struck on the head with a belaying pin in the hands of parties unknown while taking part in the mutiny or while making an effort to quell the mutineers. (But in an earlier trial Douglass had said "I knew a man named Pappaw; he was a skulker.")

On February 11th Captain Waterman was fined \$400 for beating Jon Smith for refusing to work. On the same day James Douglass was fined \$50 for flogging a Michael Gallagher with a rope. Captain Waterman testified Gallagher had been punished by his orders for mutinous conduct and refusing to carry out an assignment.

On January 28th Hugh Patterson, second mate, was charged with assaulting Seaman Brown. Evidence showed Brown, being dilatory in his duties, was kicked and beaten by Patterson, which, according to a Dr. Lamar, resulted in emasculation. Patterson was found guilty and fined \$50, in default of which he was jailed for thirty days. Judge Hoffman refused to allow Waterman to pay the fine as the jail sentence was a "disciplinary measure."

On January 17th F. Birkenshaw and A. Cowgill were charged with attacking Chief Mate Douglass on the 8th of September while he was executing the orders of the ship's master, with feloniously combining with others of the crew to subvert the authority of the ship's master and mate and to take control of the ship from the officers, and with six other counts. They were acquitted. Weir cited the San Francisco *Daily Herald* as the source of the 8th of September date. The reader will noticed that date is at variance with the testimony of James Douglass, George Hill, and Birkenshaw quoted earlier as part of Waterman's first trial.

Bancroft's comment "Captain Waterman had been severe and even cruel; whether unnecessarily so does not appear" reflects the general attitude of his time to low classes of labor. Common sailors on clipper ships were a sorry lot, the pay of eight to twelve dollars per month discouraging all but the

destitute. Of the *Challenger's* crew, only ten of the fifty-six men were Americans; and of these ten, seven were boys who had never been on ship before. The captain had to make do with the men he had and strict discipline was the only way to install the unquestioned obedience necessary for the safety of the ship.

During this period laborers in other fields were subject to low wages, long hours, and unsafe working conditions. As early as 1806 the caulkers and shipbuilders of New York City agitated for a reduction in hours to ten per day, but no laws concerning labor were enacted in United States until 1842 when Massachusetts limited children under twelve years of age to ten hours per day. In 1844 England limited the hours of women to twelve per day. For a long time a twelve-hour day and seven-day week were prevalent in the iron and steel industry. As late as 1913 the full-time employee in a blast furnace department averaged a 76.9 hour week.

Injuries were governed by common law which held that the maxim that the principal is responsible for the acts of his agent does not apply where two or more persons are working under the same employer and one is injured through the carelessness of his fellow-employee, although the one causing the accident is the agent of the principal. Nor at common law was there any obligation of the owner to provide a seaworthy ship. When a workman accepted a job in a dangerous trade, he accepted the dangers at his own risk.

The notoriety of the trials forced Captain Waterman to give up his sea career. He had earlier on August 29th, 1853, purchased an undivided one-third interest in approximately 30 square miles of land in Suisun Valley, Solano County, from Captain Ritchie, who had purchased it that same day from General M.G. Vallejo for \$10,000 cash and \$40,000 mortgage. He now began a successful second career as a real estate dealer and farmer.

David Weir relates the story of how in June of 1856 Waterman's wife noticed he had given the name of Great Jones to a street on his plat of Fairfield and accused him of naming it after a certain Cynthia Jones who had lived on such a street in New York. He denied this, saying it was named after her father, Judge Samuel Jones. Then to appease her he agreed to name something after her. The very next morning, June 14th, Waterman, his wife Cordelia, Sam Martin, and C.P. Reeves drove over to Bridgeport and in a short ceremony changed the name to Cordelia.

But Bancroft in 1885, the year after Waterman's death, wrote while com-



Cordelia Waterman at age 35

menting on communities of Solano County "The favorable hydrographic features of the county afford prominence to a number of minor landings, as Bridgeport, which absorbed the early Cordelia of 1853;..."

Bancroft was not mistaken. J.P. Munro Fraser's *History of Solano* published in 1879 states "Cordelia — next to Benicia this is the town of longest life in the county. Originally it was situated in Green Valley, about one-half mile north of the present town of Bridgeport, on the old stage road, between Sacramento and Benicia. As far back as the year 1853 there was a post office established here, but it was afterward removed to Rockville and thereafter to Bridgeport. The place, which now only exists in name, has been the scene of many of the meetings of the early county conventions, but the requirements of time, plus the railroad, have absorbed it. Bridgeport — The successor to the glories of the above described town is a station on the California Pacific Railroad...It has one Episcopal church, a school, railroad depot, hotel, box factory, etc. and possesses a population of about 300 souls.

Erwin G. Gudda's *California Place Names* explains that when the post office moved to Bridgeport in 1869, postal authorities refused to accept Bridgeport as the name, substituting Cordelia. The city fathers finally accepted the name Cordelia in 1880. The Thompson and West's *Atlas of Solano County* of 1877 shows the Cordelia Post Office in Bridgeport and

listed a number of people with Bridgeport as their residence, and Cordelia as their post office. Probably the fact that there was another town by the name of Bridgeport was of concern. In 1864 the early inhabitants of Mono County were amazed to discover their county seat, Aurora, was in Nevada. Hurriedly the county papers were transferred to a tiny roadside camp that became Bridgeport, the county seat of Mono.

Captain Waterman and Cordelia were good hosts and their spacious house was well furnished for entertaining. More than one hundred guests attended a party held on New Year's Eve of 1858. Among them were James Douglass and Hugh Patterson, his former first and second mates, and as guest of honor, the same Judge O. Hoffman who had presided at his trial. After all but a few guests had left a shot was heard. Hugh Patterson was found dead just outside the front door. No trace of the killer could be found.

According to Weir, Waterman brooded over this incident for several years. Then after receiving a mysterious tip he took his wife to England, saying they were on a vacation trip. In Liverpool he sent her on to London while he made the rounds of pubs where sailors hung out. After a week of searching he located the sailor he was seeking, one who had served on the *Challenge* and testified against him at his trial. Plying the sailor with drink, he managed to get him to brag about shooting Patterson. Meanwhile two Scotland yard men were listening from behind a partition. They took him to headquarters where he signed a full confession. Waterman then returned home, leaving the English to handle the trial. If this is true, McCorkle, the

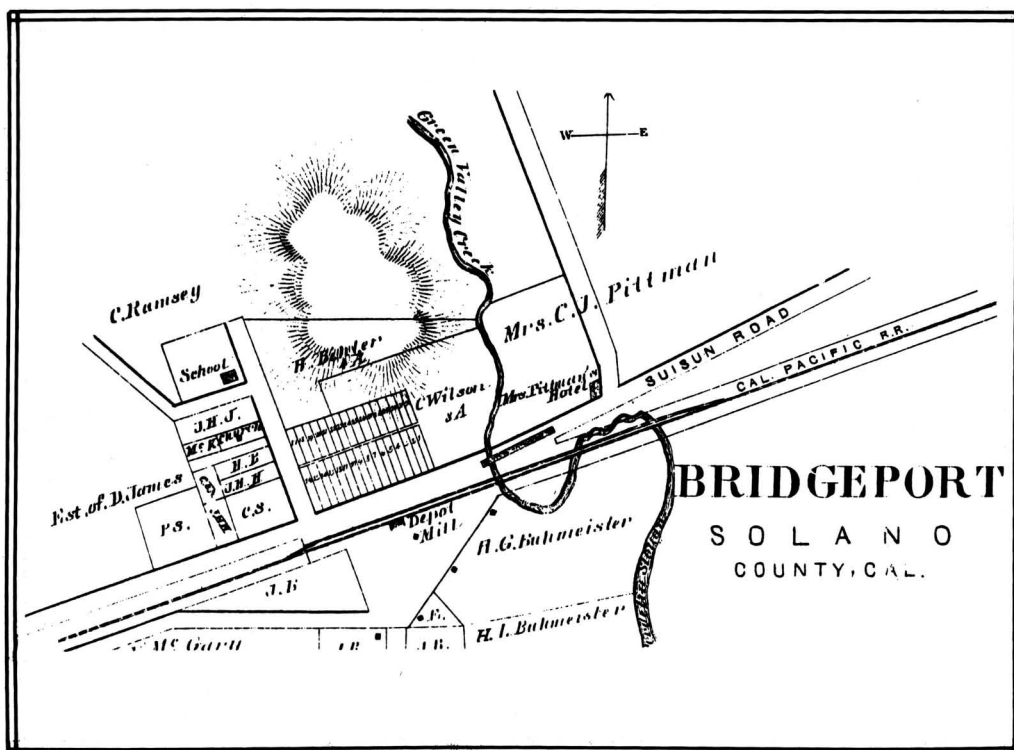


Captain Waterman's home as it was twenty-five years ago.

sailor, must have been unusually cooperative. It was not the practice of England to try its citizens for crimes they committed abroad. Throughout the development of the English criminal law it showed one particular characteristic that crime was treated as local, which means not merely that the common law of England was limited to English soil, but that an offense on English soil could only be tried and punished in the particular territorial division of England in which it was committed. However, crimes of murder and treason committed outside England could be tried in England under old laws stemming from times when the king and many nobles and knights

were in France, and there were other exceptions, nearly all involving crimes connected with the operations of the British government and its officials.

Captain Waterman died August 8, 1884. Weir quotes the *New York Times* as commenting shortly thereafter, "It was never disputed in Captain Waterman's lifetime that he was the most tyrannical and demanding sailing master who ever took a vessel out of the port of New York. Certainly he never disputed it, but on the contrary seemed to glory in the distinction.... Yes, hard a man as he was on shipboard, people who knew Captain Waterman on shore and came in frequent contact with him, declare that he was sound and good at heart. At sea he had no mercy. On shore he was among the first to contribute to the relief of a poor sailor's widow."



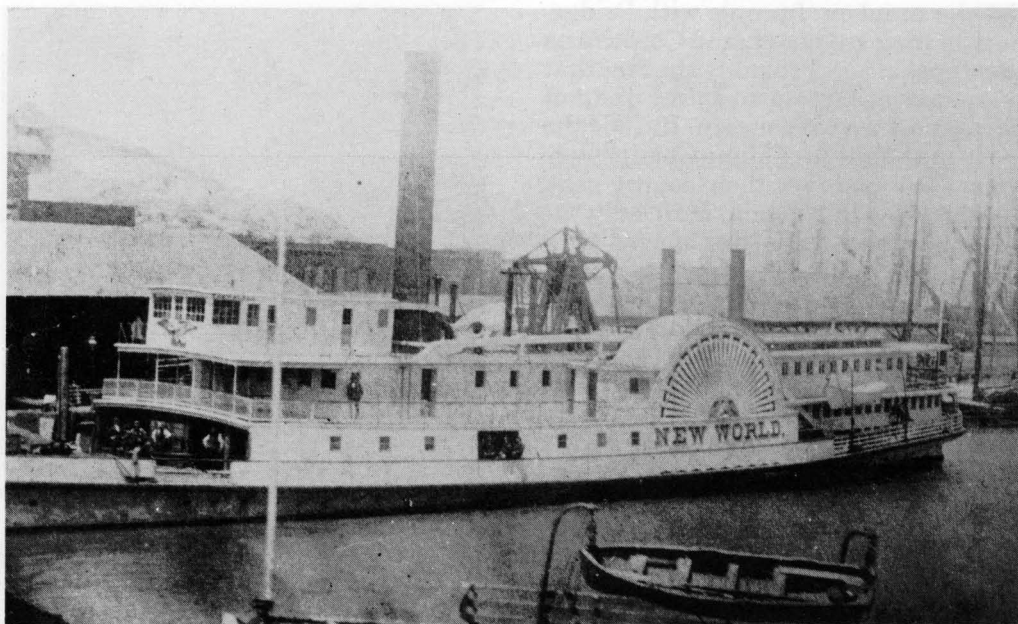
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California Pacific Railroad

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